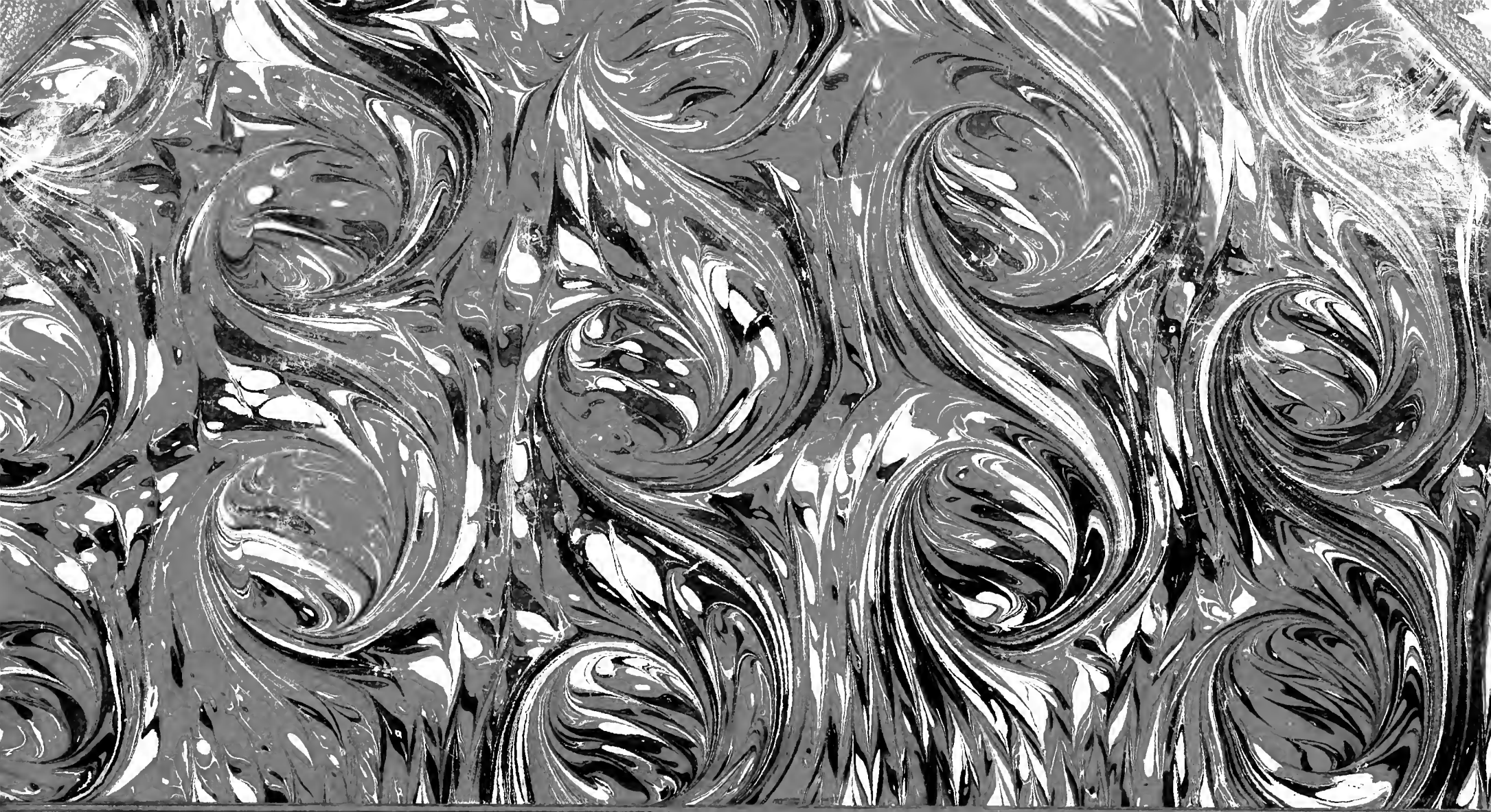

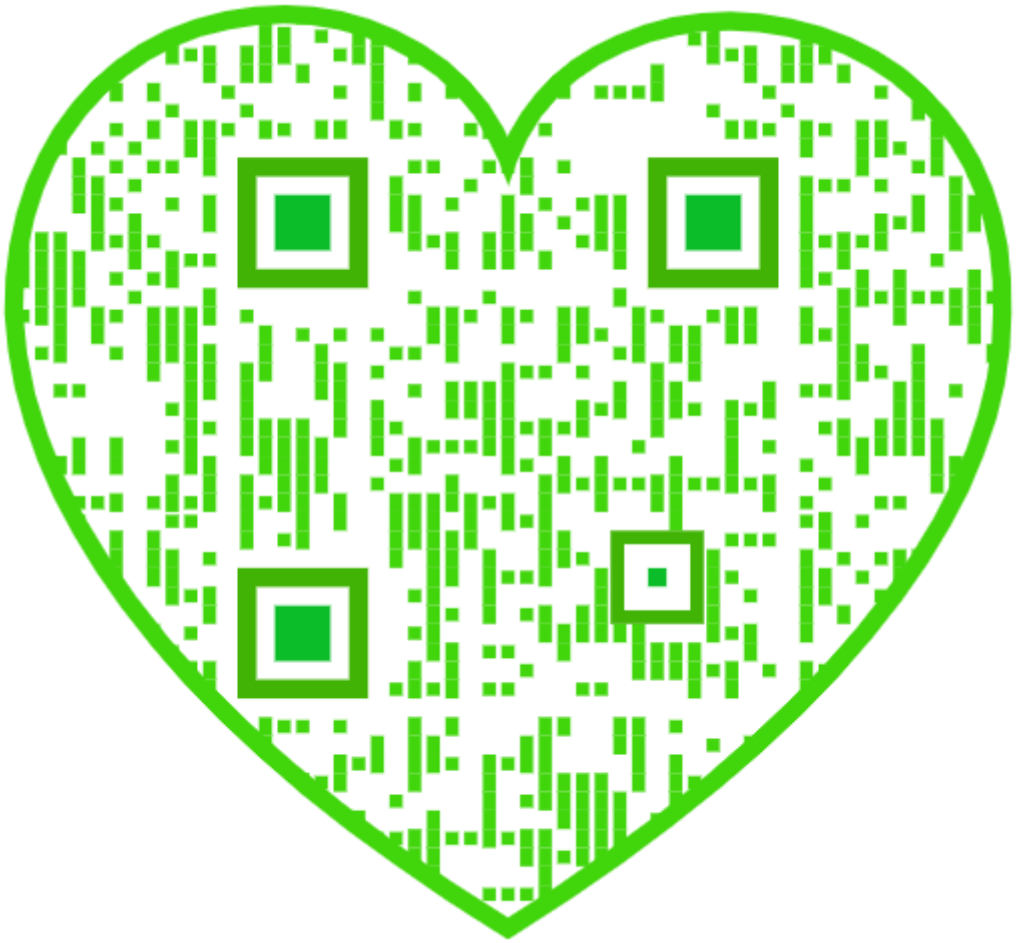

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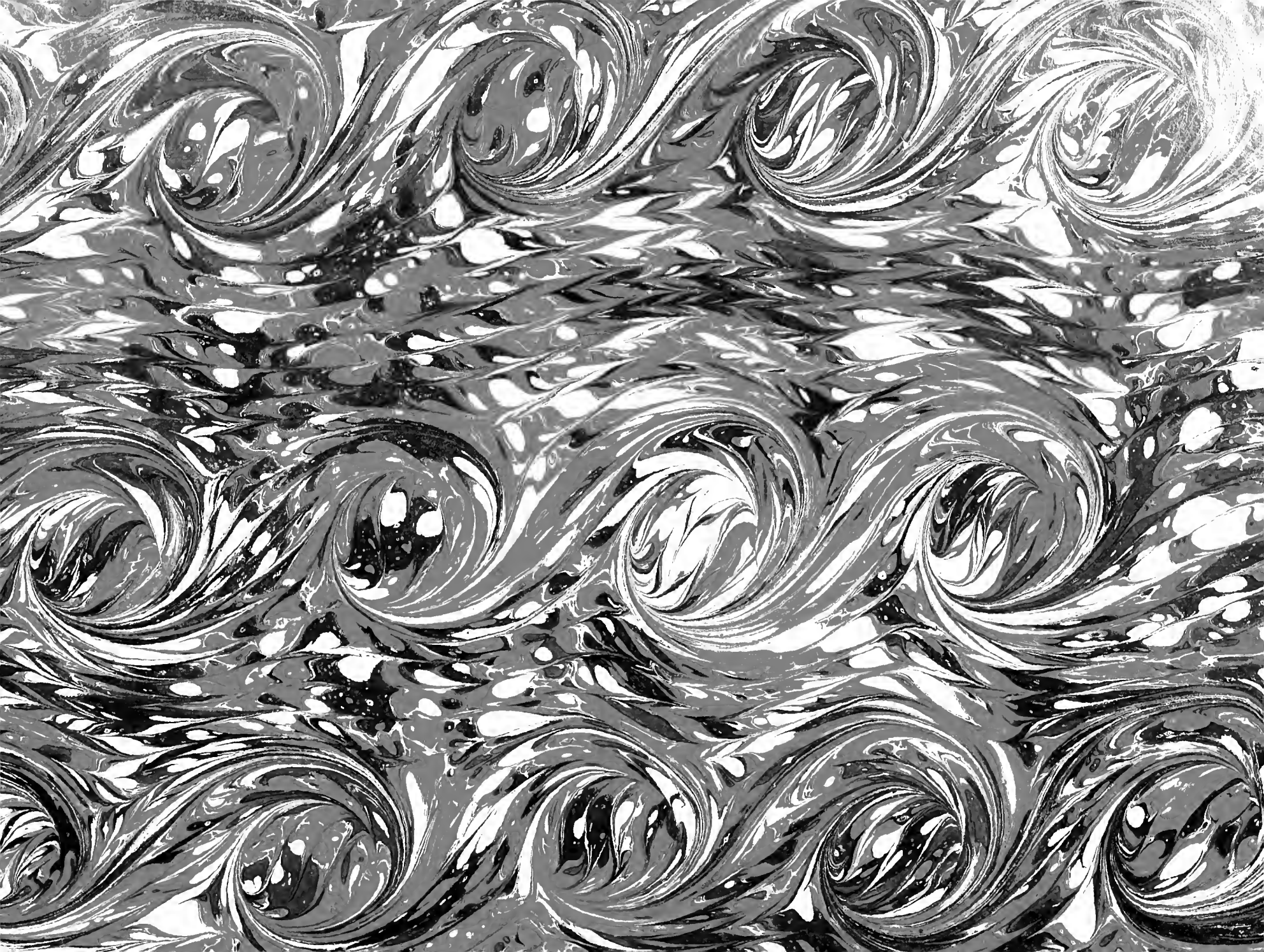

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AN INQUIRY

INTO

THE ORIGIN AND EARLY

HISTORY OF ENGRAVING,

UPON

Copper and in Wood.

VOL. I.

AN INQUIRY

INTO

THE ORIGIN AND EARLY

HISTORY OF ENGRAVING,

UPON

Copper and in Wood,

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF ENGRAVERS AND THEIR WORKS,

FROM THE

INVENTION OF CHALCOGRAPHY BY MASO FINIGUERRA,

TO THE TIME OF

MARC' ANTONIO RAIMONDI.

BY WILLIAM YOUNG OTTLEY, F.S.A.

VOL. I.

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TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

GEORGE JOHN EARL SPENCER, K. G.

&c. &c. &c.

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

WITH A DUE SENSE OF

THE ADVANTAGES DERIVED IN THE COURSE OF

ITS PROGRESS,

FROM THE USE OF MANY RARE AND VALUABLE MATERIALS

CONTAINED IN

HIS LORDSHIP'S MAGNIFICENT LIBRARY,

BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE following work owes its origin to the circumstance of my having, many years ago, when in Italy, chanced to meet with a small print; which, as well from its style of design and delicate finishing, as from the imperfect method in which the impression appeared to have been taken off, I was led to conjecture might be a genuine specimen of the abilities of Maso Finiguerra, the Inventor of Chalcography.

It happened that the painting and sculpture of the early Italian schools, and especially the school of Florence, had occupied much of my previous attention; and that I had already, more than once, visited Florence, Pisa, Orvieto, Assisi, and Siena, for the express purpose of collecting drawings, faithfully copied from the original frescoes and bassi-relievi of the early artists, with a view to illustrate the history and progress of the Arts of Design, from the dawn of their improvement in Italy, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, to the æra of their meridian splendour, under Julius the Second and Leo the Tenth. In the course of this pursuit, continued for several years with great eagerness, I naturally became somewhat conversant with the various changes of style which

took place in the painting and sculpture of the Italian schools, at different periods of the before mentioned interval; and many of those minute details, which, although they escape the notice of the more general observer, often furnish, nevertheless, the best criterion for judging of the age or school to which a work of art appertains, were to me familiar. In short I became so far a connoisseur in the very early pictures commonly known under the generic and opprobrious term, Gothic, that I sometimes found myself in a situation to pronounce as to the probable authenticity of a picture attributed to Cimabue, Giotto, Giovanni da Fiesole, or Luca Signorelli, with the same confidence that others feel in deciding as to the originality of a work of Raffaele, Titian, or Domenichino.

I have indulged myself in this apparent digression from the immediate subject of the present work, because it was the information which I had acquired during the pursuit therein mentioned, that first occasioned me to suspect that the engraving above spoken of might be by the hand of Maso Finiguerra; and finally led me to the intimate conviction that such was really the case. This conviction was naturally followed by a desire of impressing others with the same belief: a genuine print by Finiguerra was a desideratum in the history of the art, and, indeed, was considered necessary by many writers, in order to render the evidence of Vasari worthy of credit, and thereby to establish the claims of Italy to the honour of the invention in question. With this view, therefore, I entered into a minute examination of the different passages in which any mention is made of Finiguerra, or of his supposed discovery, by Vasari and other old writers; and I had already prepared a disser-

tation of some length, in which I endeavoured to enforce the pretensions of the small engraving above mentioned; when, upon the appearance of a work by Zani, under the title of 'Materiali,' &c. my vanity was flattered, on the one hand, by the perfect assurance that I had judged rightly in ascribing my print to Finiguerra, and mortified, on the other, by learning that a similar discovery had been previously made, or at least previously published, by that indefatigable inquirer.

I was not surprised to find, upon a perusal of Zani's book, that although we had both referred in many places to the same written authorities, and even cited the same passages, we differed in some of our conclusions; that some things, which to me appeared of consequence, had escaped his observation; and that his work furnished many others which had escaped my own. In short I was induced to continue my labours; especially as it was represented to me by my friends, that a work upon the origin and early history of engraving was much wanting in the English language, and as I even flattered myself with being able to add something new to the stock of information already published upon the subject by the writers of the continent.

Amongst those who strongly advised me to the completion of my design, I cannot omit to mention my neighbour and friend the Rev. T. F. Dibdin, to whom it is in a great degree owing that my book does not still remain unfinished. It is true, that had I further delayed its publication, the work might perhaps by degrees have been rendered less imperfect than it will now be found: but there is always a danger in procrastination; and the greater probability is, that but for the encouraging assurances

which I received from him, it would never have been published at all.

About three years ago, I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with Mr. S. W. Singer, who was at that time employed in a work upon the origin and history of Playing-Cards; and it was principally at the suggestion of that gentleman that I undertook to preface my Inquiry concerning the Invention of Chalcography, by some remarks upon the early use of Engraving in Wood. In the course of this part of my work, which I originally hoped to comprize within the limits of one chapter, I have more than once had occasion to express my obligations to Mr. Singer, for several pieces of valuable information; as well as for his liberality in the loan of curious books, and especially of his copy of the '*Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*,' which through his kindness I had the opportunity of examining for some months.

It happened that that part of the present Inquiry which treats of early Wood-Engraving, was finished before Mr. Singer's work was far advanced; and at his request, a copy of the book, so far printed, was sent to him for his inspection. I have thought it necessary to notice this circumstance, in order to account for the mention of this work in several passages of Mr. Singer's book, which, having been finally completed before my own, has now been many weeks in the hands of the public. Mr. Singer, I find, differs with me in opinion upon several points; but I think, upon the whole, we are less frequently at variance as to facts than consequences. There are two or three passages of his work, only, to which I think it necessary to offer a few words in reply.

Mr. Singer, I find, (p. 87), approves the opinion offered by me at page 54 of this work, that the silence of Marco Polo in his Tra-

vels, as to the use of Wood-Engraving amongst the Chinese, (who, there appears to be no doubt, practised it before his time), makes in favour, rather than otherwise, of the supposition that that art was well known, at the time he wrote, in his own country. Mr. Singer admits also (p. 95) that the account given by Papillon of certain wood-engravings said to have been executed at Ravenna, about the year 1284, by two persons of the name of Cunio, bears every appearance of truth; and agrees with me, that the decree of the government of Venice of 1441, respecting wood-engraving, is good evidence that that art had been in common use, as well in Italy as elsewhere, long previously to that date: and yet he cannot allow the probability of the truth of my opinion, stated at pages 45 and 69, that the *outlines* of the three packs of cards which were furnished for the use of Charles the VIth, king of France, in 1392, at the low price of fifty *sous* for the whole, must have been first printed, and afterwards gilt and coloured by the hand. "It is possible," Mr. Singer observes, (p. 105), "that the cards of Gringonneur were very rude "performances, seeing that a mad king could have but little discri- "mination in works of art;" he adds, that "the expression '*à or et* "*à diverses couleurs*' seems to imply, that Gringonneur's cards were "painted, and not printed;" and that "it should be observed too, "that he is called *Peintre*." He concludes with remarking, that, "*had there been any solid ground for Mr. Ottley's conjecture, the* "*French writers would have seized upon it with avidity.*"

To the last of Mr. Singer's reasons for condemning my hypothesis, I have only to say, that if it be really a good one, we ought both of us to have confined ourselves to a simple statement of the few facts we have been able to collect, *without venturing to offer any*

novel opinion or conjecture, founded upon them. A very good reason may however be given why none of the French writers upon the subject of cards have anticipated me in the opinion above mentioned: they were not thoroughly persuaded that the art of wood-engraving was practised in Europe even so early as the commencement of the fifteenth century; much less did they think it probable, like Mr. Singer and myself, that it was in use in Italy, and perhaps in France and Germany, more than a century before.

Mr. Singer's other reasons for differing with me in opinion with respect to Gringonneur's cards, do not to me appear forcible; and I cannot but express my surprise that he should not have observed, that the description given by Lanzi of certain playing-cards preserved in the Durazzo collection, and supposed to have been fabricated at Venice about the year 1400, (see p. 49), exactly corresponds with the account given of those of Gringonneur. Both were *'à or et à diverses couleurs:'* the outlines of the Venetian cards being first *printed*, the ground behind the figures was afterwards gilt, and the figures themselves were coloured by hand; and I think there is every reason to believe that the cards furnished by Gringonneur were manufactured in the same manner. That Gringonneur should have been honoured with the title of *Peintre*, can furnish no reasonable objection to my opinion that he was only an illuminist or colourer of printed cards, (and perhaps other wood-cuts); since the ancient card-makers of Germany were known by the corresponding appellation of *Briefmaler*. Besides, if, as Mr. Singer agrees with me in believing, the art of wood-engraving was commonly known as early as the thirteenth century, and (p. 107) was used in the manufacture of devotional figures, before cards were commonly

known, what hypothesis can be more reasonable, than that that art was had recourse to in the fabrication of cards, immediately upon their coming into general use? To what purpose could it be more readily applied? Where, it may be asked, was this art of wood-engraving, during the interval of an hundred and thirty-nine years, which took place from the time when it was practised by the two Cunio, to that in which the wood-cut of St. Christopher, dated 1423, was executed?*

The next part of Mr. Singer's work upon which I think it necessary to remark, is a passage which occurs at p. 128. Mr. Singer there observes, that I am the first writer who has endeavoured to shew, that the style of art which pervades the wood-cuts of the *Biblia Pauperum*, the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, and the *Historia ex Cantico Canticorum*, is that of the Low Countries, and not of Germany; after which, he proceeds to say, that "it would " be presumption in him to enter the lists with a judge so compe- " tent," as he is pleased to consider me, "to decide upon the coun- " try to which the style of art which pervades these rude perform- " ances belongs, if such puerile efforts can be said to have any " distinguishing character of this kind," &c. I am sorry that my

* Mr. Singer's objections to my opinion that Gringonneur's cards were *printed*, are the more extraordinary; since, in other parts of his work, he expresses his belief that wood-engraving was used in the manufacture of cards long before. Indeed, at p. 230, I find the following passage: "At what time " the application of xylography to the pur- " pose of multiplying cards took place, it is " not now possible to ascertain with certainty; " but there can be no doubt that they were " among the first objects it produced, and " we have every reason to conclude, that they " were printed from engraved blocks of " wood, *at least as early as the commence-* " *ment of the fourteenth century*, if they " were not derived together with this art " from the eastern world at an earlier period; " a supposition which is not entirely devoid " of probability."

friend should have thought it necessary in this place to preface his condemnation of my opinion, as to the style and merit of the cuts alluded to, with a compliment. As, however, he has omitted to give his reasons for differing with me so decidedly upon these points, it will be sufficient for me to refer the reader to the third Chapter of this work; in many parts of which I have endeavoured to shew, that the wood-engravings in the three block-books above mentioned, although in the dry manner of the time, are far from deserving the appellation of *rude performances*, or *puerile efforts* of the art.

It is not my intention to discuss all the various passages of Mr. Singer's book in which his opinion happens to be at variance with my own: he himself observes, (p. 128), that in treating of the origin of typography, he has taken a different view of the subject. I cannot, however, help remarking, that in his argument concerning the last-mentioned important question, he displays more frequently the zeal of an advocate than the deliberation of an impartial inquirer. Thus, at p. 110, Mr. Singer opens his examination of the claims of Harlem to the invention of typography, by stating, that that city, in order the more effectually to establish those claims, "*deemed it expedient* to accuse the Germans of theft, in having stolen "the art from thence;" after which he says: "let us examine with "care, and with an *unprejudiced* mind, the testimonies in her behalf, "that we may decide impartially," &c. What would be thought of the judge who should deliver an opinion as to the guilt of a prisoner, before the jury had heard the evidence for or against him! At pp. 116 and 145, and following pages, Mr. Singer intimates his suspicions that the magistracy of Harlem improperly lent their

influence in support of a story which they must have known to be false; and at p. 144, after speaking of a book of rude wood-cuts, in the collection of the Marquis of Blandford, which contains several leaves of MS. with the spurious date, as he himself considers it, of 1344, he thus expresses himself: "Had the advo-
" cates for Haerlem stumbled upon any thing half so conclusive as
" the date of the manuscript in this case, they would have urged
" it as a strong and irrefragable argument in favour of their cause."

In the third Chapter of the present work, the reader will find that I have taken some pains to explain the grounds of my conviction that the cuts of the *Biblia Pauperum*, the *Speculum*, and the *Book of Canticles*, were not only executed in the Low Countries, but also that they were in part engraved by the same artist. Mr. Singer answers all this by shortly observing, (p. 128), "that it will be
" allowed, that the evidence founded upon this parity of style is
" equivocal;" and in another place, (p. 131), he says: "Mr. Ottley
" argues from the similarity of style in the design, and the *knack* of
" the execution: surely," he continues, "these are not infallible
" guides; and more certain demonstration seems necessary in a
" decision of so much importance." I am by no means satisfied with this brief mode of getting rid of an argument which happens to oppose itself to the writer's hypothesis. On the contrary, I think that it may fairly be maintained, that parity of style, in two or more works of art, generally furnishes a very satisfactory ground for the belief that such productions were executed in the same school, and at nearly the same period; and that if, in addition to this general similarity of style, we observe in them the same peculiar *knack* in the execution of the parts, which I have noticed in some of the cuts

of each of the three Block-Books above mentioned, (a peculiarity which may be compared to that by which the hand-writing of one individual is distinguished from that of another) we have then the strongest possible evidence that such performances were the work of the same hand.*

I should greatly exceed the ordinary limits of a Preface, were I to attempt to answer all the parts of Mr. Singer's argument, concerning the invention of typography, which are opposed to my own: but it is necessary I should observe, that he has greatly mistaken my intention, when, at p. 130, he states, that all that I have attempted to shew is, *the probability that the Speculum was printed before the year* 1472. An attempt to *demonstrate* this does indeed make *one branch of my argument;* but it is only a branch of it,—and I have written to little purpose if the evidence and the arguments which I have adduced in the course of my inquiry appear to lead to no further conclusion. It is true that I have not felt myself

* Lest, however, the resemblance which I have noticed in the style of execution, in some of the cuts of the three block-books above mentioned, should on all sides be admitted to be so perfect, as fully to justify the conclusion that the same wood-engraver was employed upon each of those works, Mr. Singer prepares a mode of avoiding the inference which would, otherwise, necessarily follow the establishment of such a fact. He suggests, in his note at p. 131, that "the "existence of a *species of signature* in the "*Biblia Pauperum*," (Mr. Singer means the initial letters by which the cuts are distinguished) "might be urged in proof of its "being executed posterior to 1470." This argument, were it well founded, would make equally against the antiquity of most of the other block-books. The pages of text in the *Ars Memorandi*, which Mr. Dibdin thinks the most ancient of all, (and Mr. Singer seems to join in the opinion) are distinguished in the same manner, and so are the pages of the block-book of *the Apocalypse*, and those of all the editions of the *Biblia Pauperum*. It is something to urge against Mr. Singer's argument, (which is at variance with the opinions of every writer upon the subject of typographical inquiry that I know of) that one of the *latter* editions of the *Biblia Pauperum*, in which the text is translated into the German language, happens to bear the date of 1470. See *Heinecken*, "Idée Generale," p. 325.

adequate to pronounce a *decided judgment* upon the question which I have discussed; but this my want of confidence in a matter of so much importance, can furnish no additional strength to the opposite party; and I must conclude these remarks upon Mr. Singer's work by observing, that to some of the most important parts of the evidence, and the argument which I have brought forward in favour of the side I have taken, he does not appear to me to have offered any satisfactory answer.* But to return to the object of the present undertaking.

The title-page of this work will, I believe, be found to convey a sufficiently correct idea of its contents. The first five chapters consist principally of inquiry concerning the authenticity of documents, relating to the antiquity of the art of wood-engraving and the invention of chalcography, and of argument founded upon the results of such inquiry. The extreme paucity of contemporaneous written documents respecting the origin or early use of engraving, and the dubious light in which some of these have been viewed by most of our modern writers, seemed to render this mode of treating the subject peculiarly necessary; and I have sometimes, whilst pursuing my investigations, felt disposed to consider myself as a sort of literary pioneer, whose business it was to remove obstructions, and clear the way for those who are to follow. How far I

* Especially the fact, which I think I have sufficiently proved, that the edition of the *Speculum*, printed partly from engraved blocks, and partly with moveable type, which has heretofore been commonly considered the *first* edition of that work, was in reality the *third*. This extraordinary circumstance appears to me to make strongly in favour of the traditions recorded by Junius and Guicciardini, and I have argued accordingly. Mr. Singer (note, p. 129) does "not see the advantage which is derived to Harlem from "this discovery."

have performed this task, it is not for me to judge; but I hope the writer, who at some future period may undertake to compose a more regular history of the origin and early progress of engraving, may find that, by discussing points of controversy so much at length as I have done, I have in some measure facilitated his labours. Even in the sixth and following chapters, wherein I have given the best account I am able of the early engravers on copper, and catalogues of their works, I have not unfrequently found myself called upon to examine doubtful evidence, or to controvert commonly received doctrines.

It were vain to suppose, that the opinions which I have hazarded upon these various occasions, should all prove to be well founded. He who quits the beaten path, in hopes of discovery, may chance to be repaid for his toil: but he will often find himself entangled in difficulties which he did not foresee; and sometimes opposed by obstacles which he is unable to surmount. A work like the present must necessarily contain many errors, and for such I claim the indulgence of the reader.

I have only to add, that in the progress of my inquiries I have seldom, if ever, taken any thing from another writer without acknowledging it; and that it has always been my wish to preserve a due respect towards those who have written before me, when perchance I happened to differ from them in opinion. If, in the warmth of argument, I should occasionally appear to have deviated from this rule, I am sorry for it; and I particularly wish to assure Mr. Bartsch, to whose extensive and valuable work I owe much of the information which is contained in my own, that I am very far from entertaining the most distant idea that the keepers of the

Imperial cabinet of prints at Vienna have not, at all times, been as faithful guardians of the early specimens of Italian engraving entrusted to their care, as of those of Germany.*

In the course of this work I have had occasion to express my acknowledgments to several gentlemen, and especially to Francis Douce, and Thomas Lloyd, Esqrs. for their kindness in the loan of curious and valuable materials, as well as for many interesting communications, which their experience enabled them to furnish: but I have still to return my best thanks to William Alexander, Esq. for the obliging attention which I have at all times experienced from him, during my researches in the extensive collection of ancient engravings at the British Museum; a collection, of which his gentlemanly politeness, and his acquirements as an artist, render him, in every respect, so worthy a superintendent and guardian.

* I have thought it necessary to make the above declaration, in consequence of a friend having suggested, that an expression used by me in the heat of disputation at p. 343, might otherwise admit of being construed into a serious accusation.

Kensington, June 7th, 1816.

DIRECTIONS

FOR PLACING THOSE CUTS WHICH ARE NOT INSERTED IN THE LETTER-PRESS.

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CHAPTER I.

The Process employed in Wood Engraving—The Antiquity of this Art in China—Earliest account of Wood Engraving in Europe—Papillon's story of the two Cunio—examined—and judged authentic.

THE art of engraving the designs of figures, and other objects, on blocks of wood, and of multiplying such representations, by means of impressions taken from them on paper, appears to have been practised in different parts of Europe, long before it was discovered that engraved plates of metal could also be applied to similar purposes. Some account, therefore, of the ancient practice of Wood Engraving, will properly precede our inquiry concerning the Invention of Chalcography.

But first I will speak briefly of the process by which works of this kind are executed: for I have had occasion to observe, that books, relating to particular arts or sciences, are often in a great degree unintelligible to all those who are not previously informed on the subjects they treat of, merely because the authors of them, taking it for granted that the rudiments of those studies were familiar to all who were likely to peruse their books, omitted, at the beginning, to explain a few first principles; without a knowledge of which it was impossible for any one to understand their discourse; although, in some cases, a few words would have been sufficient for this end. The following short account of the method employed in wood engraving will, in a great measure, obviate similar objections in the present instance; and will, at least, inform the reader, who has not hitherto considered the subject, concerning those important distinctions between the two arts of WOOD ENGRAVING and COPPER-PLATE ENGRAVING,* without a clear idea of which it would be difficult for him to comprehend our subsequent argument. Of course this is not intended for the instruction of the artist.

The process is as follows. The artist, having decided upon the subject and dimensions of his intended work, most usually prepares a correct design on thin paper. This drawing is either a simple outline of the proposed subject, or finished with hatchings to an effect similar to that which the print is intended to produce. A block of wood, of a close grain,† and of a flat and even surface,

* It is totally inconceivable how the authors of the great French Encyclopedia should have committed so great an error, as to say, "La THEORIE de la *gravure en bois* est la "même que celle de la *gravure à l'eau forte* "*& au burin*, &c."—Who would not be led to suppose from such a remark, that the strokes intended to print black in wood engraving were cut into the wooden block, in the same manner as in engravings on copper? *Dictionnaire des Arts de Peinture, Sculpture*, &c.—1792. 8*vo. tom.* ii. *p.* 478.

† Box-wood, from its hardness, and the closeness of its grain, is now preferred, especially for delicate work. It is, however, difficult to procure it of dimensions sufficient for large engravings. Sometimes several pieces of box are mortised together, so as to form one large block. The old German wood engravers generally used peartree; at least we

corresponding to the size of the drawing, is then procured. The drawing, meanwhile, has been rendered transparent by rubbing it over on the back with oil, turpentine, or varnish. Another piece of fine paper is now rubbed all over, on one side, with red or black chalk, or charcoal; or, if the wood be of a dark tint, with white lead, or whiting. This paper is laid, with its smeared side downwards, upon the prepared block; and the drawing, also with its face downwards, is laid upon it. The artist then passes over all the lines of the drawing with a blunt steel point, or with a hard pencil, by which means, upon removing the drawing and the smeared paper from the block, he finds all the lines of his drawing faintly traced upon the wood in a reversed direction.* He next strengthens the different outlines and hatchings of his design with a pen and ink, or with a hard pencil, giving to each stroke its proper thickness, and, to the whole, an effect in every respect resembling that which the print is designed to have when finished. Skilful designers often make their drawing at once on the wooden block, without having recourse to this double process.

The design on the wooden block being thus completed with a pen or pencil, nothing now remains but to engrave, and afterwards to print it.

In engraving on copper, every line or touch which is intended to be dark in the impression, is cut into the copper, which is thus hollowed in all those parts intended to receive the printing ink. In wood engraving, the reverse is the case; the surface of the block being left in its original state in all those parts which are intended

are informed that all the blocks of the celebrated triumph of Maximilian, engraved from the designs of *Hans Burghmair*, shortly before the death of that emperor, (135 of which are still preserved in the imperial library at Vienna,) are of that wood. *Bartsch*, "Peintre Graveur," tom. vii. p. 229.

* This is one way of doing it: but, of course, in such matters, every artist follows a way of his own. I understand, that if the block is rubbed over with wax, and the drawing, with its face downwards, is laid upon it, it is found that the outline may be transferred to the surface of the block by friction. The old German wood engravers are said to have glued the drawing itself, first made transparent, upon the block, and to have cut through it in the manner used by the Chinese.

to receive the ink, and to be dark in the impression. The business of the wood engraver is, therefore, to cut away and excavate the wood with gouges, and other instruments, in all those parts which are intended to be white in the impression; which parts, of course, are all those whereon no traces of the pen or pencil appear.

When the work is finished, the original and even surface of the block remains in the places marked with the pen or pencil, and in no others; the wood being every where else hollowed out to such a depth, as to render it easy for the printer to apply a black tint to the projecting surface, by means of a dabber, without soiling the parts excavated and intended to appear white, and thus impossible for the paper, in the moment of receiving the impression, to come in contact with any parts of the block, except such as are intended to be impressed.

The greatest difficulty in wood engraving occurs in clearing out the minute quadrangular lights, occasioned in the shadows by one row of hatchings being crossed at a right angle by other hatchings. To do this, so that each stroke shall preserve the freedom of the pen, is indeed a task of extreme delicacy; for that which, in drawing or in copper-plate engraving, is done with one sweep of the pen or burin, is here to be effected by a multiplicity of minute and tedious operations. Hence those artists of the present day, who are accustomed to make designs for wood engraving, avoid cross-hatchings as much as possible; depending, for the force of their shadows, upon the thickness and proximity of the strokes, not, as in copper-plate engraving, upon crossing and re-crossing them with other strokes.

But however great the difficulty of representing the cross hatchings in wood engraving, it was surmounted by the German artists of the beginning of the XVIth century, many of whose prints have all the freedom of masterly pen drawings.*

* Upon this subject I shall have occasion to speak more fully in a subsequent page; meanwhile, I will only caution the reader, that the doubts of *Mr. Landseer*, as to these

The ORIGIN OF ENGRAVING IN WOOD, like that of many other useful arts, is obscured by clouds, which the learned have in vain laboured to dispel. The want of evidence, contemporaneous, or

old prints being really printed not from engraved wooden blocks, but rather from tablets of cast metal, are rendered futile by the actual existence of a very great number of the old wood blocks themselves; and, amongst others (I speak it upon the unquestionable authority of Mr. Douce, who had them for some time in his own possession), several of those of the "small set of the Passion," by *Albert Durer*.

Mr. Landseer's hypothesis (and I must own it is a very ingenious one, since it furnishes the hint for a new mode of manufacturing prints from cast metal blocks) seems to me to have been founded upon false premises. He takes it for granted, that wood engraving, or, as he expresses himself, that which has generally been considered wood engraving, was used by the old German artists, as "being obviously the *easiest* mode of producing the effects which their authors had in view," (*Lectures*, page 202). Now, says he, many of these old prints, which are called wood cuts, are full of cross hatchings, which could not, by any method we are acquainted with, have been executed on wood without extreme labour and difficulty; and, therefore, I suspect "that they are either etchings—the lights being corroded away; or, which is yet more likely, that a prototype or matrix was cut in intaglio, probably with the graver, in which the tablets, from whence the prints are taken, were cast in the manner of letter-types."

But the fact appears to be, that wood engraving was resorted to by the greatest artists of Germany, as the most eligible mode of multiplying their designs, not because it was a process of *small labour*, but because it required mechanical dexterity, and little else. The designer finished his drawing with firm and decided strokes of the pen upon the block, or on paper which was afterwards glued upon it: inferior artists brought up under his eye, and, perhaps, in his house, were very capable of cutting away the wood between the strokes of the pen: little or no knowledge of drawing was necessary in the operation: all that was required was sharp tools and care. Thus an expert and able designer like Albert Durer, or Hans Burghmair, could find employment for a score of young men, whose labours, as their value was entirely dependent upon the skill of the designer, were no doubt procured at a moderate price. It is likewise to be remembered, that the value of labour did not bear the same proportion to the price of the metals in those early times as it does now.

In engravings on copper, the original artist was obliged to execute the whole work himself, at least such was the custom of Albert Durer, and the other engravers of his time, whereas his superintendence alone was sufficient in engravings executed on wood. One more remark will, I think, suffice to show the advantages which the designers of Germany derived from resorting to wood engraving; the block, when once finished, was capable of furnishing *many thousand impressions*, whereas an engraving on metal could furnish, comparatively, but a very limited number.

nearly contemporaneous with the truth sought for, has hitherto rendered every attempt for its attainment unavailing; and conjecture and hypothesis must still be employed to fill the chasms which proofs cannot be found to occupy. That it is of Asiatic original, appears to be the best founded opinion; and if the name of its inventor is destined ever to be known, it is most probable that it will be found among the records of Eastern nations.

Of all the nations with which we are acquainted, China seems to have the best claim to the invention.

It is well known that the Chinese, in writing their language, do not describe words by means of a combination of letters, each expressive of a particular sound, as is the case in European languages; but that they represent each word of their endless vocabulary by one distinct character serving to indicate it alone; if, indeed, those characters can properly be termed the representations of words, which are often, individually, expressive of a sentiment that could not, in speaking, be expressed without the assistance of many words. The prodigious number of these characters, amounting, according to some accounts, to eighty thousand, renders it impracticable for them to print their books with moveable types. To cast them separately would be an endless undertaking; and, were it done, by far the greater part of them would be of very rare occurrence.*

"The method they pursue," says du Halde, "is as follows. The "work intended to be printed is transcribed by a careful writer upon "thin transparent paper. The engraver glues each of these written "sheets, with its face downwards, upon a smooth tablet of pear "or apple-tree, or some other hard wood; and then, with gravers "and other instruments, he cuts the wood away in all those parts "upon which he finds nothing traced; thus leaving the transcribed "characters ready for printing. In this manner he prepares as "many blocks as there are written pages. He then prints the num- "ber of copies immediately wanted; for he can always print more,

* *J. B. du Halde,* "Description, &c. de l'Empire de la Chine." 4to. 1736—tom. ii. p. 299.

" if they are required, without the labour of re-composition ne-
" cessary in typography: nor is any time lost in correcting the
" proof sheets, for, as he is guided in his engraving by the strokes
" of the written copy, or perhaps the original of the author him-
" self, it is impossible for him to make any mistakes, if the copy
" is written with exactness.

" The advantage of this mode of printing is, that the booksellers
" are not obliged to print a greater number of copies of any work
" than there is an immediate demand for; and consequently they
" do not run the risk of only selling half their impression, and
" of being ruined by useless expense, as often happens to Eu-
" ropean publishers. Besides, after having taken off thirty or
" forty thousand copies, they can easily have the engraved blocks
" retouched, and fitted to throw off other editions."

In printing, the Chinese do not use a press, as we do in Europe; the delicate nature of their paper would not permit of it: " When once, however, the blocks are engraved, the paper is cut, " and the ink is ready, one man," says du Halde, " with his brush " can, without fatigue, print ten thousand sheets in a day.*

" The block to be printed must be placed level, and firmly fixed. " The man must have two brushes; one of them of a stiffer kind, " which he can hold in his hand, and use at either end. He dips it " into the ink, and rubs the block with it; taking care not to wet " it too much, or to leave it too dry: if it were wetted too much, " the characters would be slurred; if too little, they would not " print. When the block is once got into a proper state, he can " print three or four sheets following without dipping his brush into " the ink.

" The second brush is used to rub over the paper, with a small " degree of pressure, that it may take the impression: this it does

* *Dix mille feuilles.* Had this number been stated in figures, I should have given the printer credit for having introduced a cipher extraordinary, in honour of Chinese industry. The account is absolutely incredible.

" easily, for, not being sized with alum, it receives the ink the instant " it comes in contact with it. It is only necessary that the brush " should be passed over every part of the sheet with a greater or " smaller degree of pressure, and repeated in proportion as the " printer finds there is more or less ink upon the block. This " brush is soft, and of an oblong form."*

Thus, with great neatness, but on one side of the paper only, the Chinese print their books, which are often embellished with engravings in outline, of figures, landscapes, or other subjects, executed in the same manner.

This art of printing from engraved blocks of wood appears to be of very high antiquity amongst the Chinese; and, indeed, Father du Halde gives the following passage, cited by an old Chinese author, from the moral writings of the celebrated Emperour Von Vang, by which some writers have been led to conjecture that it was practised by them more than three thousand years ago; for that Prince flourished 1120 years before Christ.† " As the stone Me," (a word signifying ink in the Chinese language) " which is used to blacken " the engraved characters, can never become white; so a heart " blackened by vices will always retain its blackness." This passage, however, is not cited by du Halde to prove the antiquity of printing amongst the Chinese, but solely in reference to their Ink, which it is possible might have been used by them, at a very ancient period, to blacken, and thereby render more easily legible, the cha-

* *Du Halde*, tom. ii. 299, 300. The extreme thinness and pliancy of the Chinese paper renders a small degree of pressure sufficient. In the Museum at the India-House, however, I was shown, as a part of the apparatus used in Chinese printing, a kind of rubber, made somewhat in the form of a cushion. This, and the brush, which accompanied it, for putting on the ink, were made, as I was informed, of the fibres which enclose the young shoots of the cocoa-nut tree. The Chinese use their paper without damping it.

† Idem. tom. ii. p. 294. It is remarkable, that *Papillon*, " Traité de la Gravure en Bois." tom. i. p. 30—and since him, *Jansen*, " Essai sur l'Origine de la Gravure." tom. i. p. 73, have both cited this passage with a reference to the antiquity of Chinese printing.

racters of engraved * inscriptions. The art of printing, he informs us in other parts of his book, was not discovered in China until about fifty years before the Christian era, under the reign of Ming Tsong I. the second Emperour of the Tartarian dynasty.†

The Chinese were not acquainted with the art of making paper until ninety-five years after Christ, before which period they had been accustomed to transcribe, or print their writings, in volumes of silk or cloth, cut into the form of leaves.‡

So says Father du Halde; whose authority I give without any comment, as the defence of Chinese chronology makes no part of the present undertaking. That the art of block-printing was practised by the Chinese, and also by some other eastern nations, several centuries previous to the knowledge of such an art amongst the nations of Europe, is, on all sides, admitted; and it would be useless labour to collect the proofs of that which no one is disposed to deny.§

With respect to the period at which WOOD ENGRAVING WAS FIRST PRACTISED IN EUROPE, the opinions of the learned have been greatly at variance; some writers having dated its commencement but a little earlier than the invention of typography, to which it is supposed to have given rise; whilst others have considered it of much more ancient usage. It has also been a question, and it is a question to which, perhaps, no certain answer can now be given, whether we derived it from the Chinese; or, without any previous knowledge of their practice, discovered it ourselves. On the one hand, we have no historical evidence that this art was invented in Europe; and, on the other, it has been contended, that we possess very scanty

* The ancient Romans and the Etruscans, if I mistake not, often coloured the letters of their engraved inscriptions with a red colour, and upon some occasions gilded them.

† Du Halde—tom. i. p. 353 and 413.

‡ Du Halde—tom. ii. 288.

§ The reader will find many curious particulars relative to oriental block-printing in the first volume of *Papillon*, "Traité Historique, &c. de la Gravure en Bois." 8vo. Paris, 1766.

accounts of that kind of intercourse between China and the inhabitants of Europe, in early times, which might give likelihood to the supposition that it found its way to us from that country; and, moreover, that the writings of the earliest European travellers, who visited China, are silent upon the subject. The question is, therefore, one of great difficulty, as we are left to decide concerning it, on one side, or the other, not so much upon the evidence of facts, as upon the preponderance of probabilities. The arguments respecting it, however, will best develope themselves in the course of our inquiry.

The earliest document in favour of Wood Engraving in Europe that I am acquainted with (if document that may be called which so many critics have agreed in condemning as spurious) is given by Papillon; a writer on whom Heineken did not hesitate to pronounce the severe sentence, that "he found him too ignorant to merit any "notice." * Papillon, however, has since found a defender in Zani; whose learning and deep research into the subjects I am treating of, certainly entitle him to respect, and whose authority will be admitted as a sufficient ground for my granting a further hearing to the French writer in this place: especially as his case has not been fairly stated, and as the importance of the facts he records, renders an inquiry into their authenticity well worth the labour.

* The sentence was more severe than the offence merited. *Papillon* had understood the generic term *alea* (a term properly applied to denote gaming of all sorts) to signify cards. It was at most a venial error, and could indeed be defended upon the ground that cards might very properly be included in its meaning.—Even the authors of the *Vocabolario della Crusca* use it to denote cards, (Venezia, 1763. t. i. p. 424. § xii.). They say, "CARTE diciamo anche a un mazzo di "Carte dipinte, delle quali ci serviamo per "giucare. Lat. *alea, chartæ lusoriæ*, &c."

Heineken, however, is very angry, and peevishly says in a note (Idée Générale, p. 239), "Je n'aurois pas nommé ici *Papillon*, si je "n'avois pas cité, sur sa foy, dans mon ou-"vrage Alemand, l'édit de St. Louis de l'an-"née 1254. Mais après avoir cherché et lû "moi-même cet édit dans la Bibliotheque "Royale de Paris, j'ai vû que cet écrivain "est trop ignorant, pour être allegué à "l'avenir."—Heineken's own readers are the sufferers, since his book contains several errors, which a little more respect for the labours of other writers, and, amongst the rest, for those of Papillon, would perhaps have prevented his committing.

The nature of the investigation makes it necessary, in the first place, that I should insert an extract of considerable length, from Papillon's book; in the course of which I shall occasionally offer a short observation of my own, by which the reader will be the better prepared for the argument which follows.

" It is more than thirty-five years ago," says Papillon, " since I " mislaid three sheets of paper, upon which I had written the de- " scriptions of certain ancient books of wood engravings. For a " long time there only remained a very confused idea of them in my " mind: I remember to have searched for those papers more than " twenty times in the course of writing my book, or upon the occa- " sions of my sending such parts of it as were finished to the press. " By accident, on the day of All-Saints, in the year 1758, I chanced " to discover those manuscript sheets, which had given me so much " uneasiness, amongst a bundle of papers for hanging rooms, which " my deceased father was, at one time, accustomed to manufacture. " The circumstance gave me the greater pleasure, as, from the " name of a Pope, I discovered in these writings an epoch of en- " graving prints, and characters, in wood, certainly much more an- " cient than any hitherto known in Europe; accompanied by a story " relative to this subject, at once curious and interesting. I had " so far lost the remembrance of all this, that I had not de- " signed to make even the slightest mention of it in this history " of my art.* This is the proper place to speak of it: but, first, " I must inform my readers how it came to my knowledge.

*" J'avois tellement perdue le souvenir de " tout cela, que je n'avois pas daigné en dire la " moindre chose dans cette Histoire de mon " Art." And, in fact, his book seems to have been, for the most part, written before he happened to find the *memoranda* so long mislaid: for in the preceding paragraph (tom. i. p. 82.) he conjectures that engraving in wood may have been invented in the xivth century. " Toutes les anciennes Gravures " en bois sont sans date et sans noms de " Graveurs, de façon que l'on ne peut rai- " sonnablement remonter plus haut, pour leur " antiquité, qu'au commencement du quin- " zième siecle, quoique la Gravure en bois " *ait pû être inventée dans le quatorzième*," &c. He, therefore, appears to have introduced this narrative, just as he found it, without taking the trouble to alter that which he had previously written, however contradictory.

" When I was a very young man, and employed by my father, " almost every week-day, in different places, to paste or arrange " our papers for the hanging of rooms, it happened that in 1719 " or 1720, I was sent to the village of Bagneux, near Mont-Rouge, " to a Mr. De Greder, a Swiss Captain, who there possessed a very " pretty house. After I had papered a closet for him, he em- " ployed me to paste certain papers, in imitation of Mosaic, upon " the shelves of his library. One day, after dinner, he found me " reading in one of his books, and was, in consequence, induced to " shew me two or three very ancient volumes, which had been lent " to him by a Swiss officer, one of his friends, that he might examine " them at his leisure: we conversed together about the prints con- " tained in them, and concerning the antiquity of Engraving in " Wood. I will now give the descriptions of these ancient volumes; " such as I wrote them in his *presence, and as he had the good- " ness to dictate, and explain to me.

" Upon a ' cartouch,'† or frontispiece, decorated with fanciful " ornaments, (which, although gothic, are far from disagreeable,) " and measuring about nine inches in width, by six in height; with, " at the top of it, the arms, no doubt, of the family of CUNIO, are

* " Telle que je l'écrivis devant lui, et " qu'il eut la bonté de me l'expliquer et de " me la dicter." (p. 84). We have, therefore, no other than a *correct copy* of that which Papillon wrote more than thirty-five years before, with these ancient books before him, and in the presence of M. de Greder; not an account written by memory.

Papillon was born in June 1698: in 1719 or 1720, therefore, when he saw the book in question, he was in his 21st or 22d year. In 1758, when he recovered the manuscript memoranda which he had so long mislaid, he was, of consequence, about 60.

† I am obliged to retain the French word *cartouch*, since I can find no term in the English language by which to express its meaning. It is used to denote those fantastic ornaments which were formerly introduced in decorating the wainscots of rooms; and frequently served the purpose of frames, surrounding inscriptions, small paintings, or other devices. These *cartouches* were much in vogue in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for the frontispieces of books of prints; and, indeed, *Callot* and *Della Bella* etched many entire sets of small subjects, surrounded by similar ornaments. From the irregularity of their forms, the terms—tablet, shield, or pannel—would be but ill expressive of their character.

" rudely engraved the following words, in bad Latin, or ancient " gothic Italian, with many abbreviations:"

[So far Papillon himself, who described what he saw before him. The coat of arms at top, says he, is no doubt that of the family of Cunio: as for the inscription, he could not determine whether it was in Latin, or in old Italian; much less could he read it. It is, however, probable that he was able to make out the names of Alexander, Pope Honorius IV., and the two Cunio. Mr. de Greder deciphered, and translated the inscription, and dictated to him to this effect:]

" THE HEROIC ACTIONS, REPRESENTED IN FIGURES,

" *Of the great and magnanimous Macedonian King, the bold and* " *valiant Alexander; dedicated, presented, and humbly offered to the* " *most holy father Pope Honorius IV., the glory and support of* " *the Church, and to our illustrious and generous father and mother,* " *by us* Alessandro Alberico Cunio, *Cavaliere, and* Isabella Cunio, " *twin brother and sister: first reduced, imagined, and attempted to* " *be executed in relief, with a small knife, on blocks of wood, made* " *even and polished by this learned and dear sister; continued, and finished* " *by us together, at Ravenna, from the eight pictures of our invention,* " *painted six times larger than here represented; engraved, explained* " *by verses, and thus marked upon the paper, to perpetuate the number* " *of them, and to enable us to present them to our relations and friends, in* " *testimony of gratitude, friendship, and affection. All this was done* " *and finished by us when only sixteen years of age.*" *

* The cramped style of this inscription, in the French, furnishes, I think, most satisfactory evidence, that it was *bona fide*, and literally, translated from a Latin original:

LES CHEVALEUREUX FAITS
en Figures.

" Du grand et magnanime Macédonien " Roi, le preux et vaillant Alexandre, dédié, " présenté et offert humblement au très- " saint pere le Pape, Honorius IV, la gloire " et le soutien de l'Eglise, et à nos illustres " et généreux pere et mere, par nous Alex- " andre Alberic Cunio, Chevalier, et Isabelle " Cunio, frère et sœur jumeaux; premièrement " réduit, imaginé et essayé de faire en relief, " avec un petit couteau, en tables de bois, " unies et polies par cette sçavante et chere " sœur, continués et achevés ensemblement

Having given this inscription, as dictated to him in French by Mr. de Greder, Papillon continues his remarks—"This cartouch "is enclosed in a square, formed by a simple black line, one-twelfth "of an inch in thickness; a few light hatchings, irregularly placed, "and executed without precision, indicate the shadows of the or- "naments. The whole, like the prints which follow, was taken "off, according to all appearances, with a pale tint of indigo in "distemper, by passing the hand several times over the paper, "after it had been laid on the block; in the simple manner used by "the manufacturers of cards in printing their addresses, and the "wrappers in which they enclose their packs of cards. The ground, "or field of the print, not having been sufficiently hollowed out in "the block in some places, has occasioned the paper, which is of a "brownish colour, to be smeared in those parts; in consequence of "which the following memorandum was written on the margin be- "neath; that the fault might be rectified. It is in gothic Italian, "which M. de Greder had great difficulty to decipher, and was, "no doubt, written upon this proof, probably the first taken from "the block, by the hand of the Chevalier Cunio, or that of his "sister."

"*The ground of the wooden blocks must be hollowed deeper, "that the paper may not touch it any more in receiving the im- "pression.*" *

Papillon resumes his remarks. "Immediately following this frontis- "piece," says he, "are the eight pictures, engraved in wood, of the same "dimensions, and surrounded by a similar fillet: they have, also, a few

"à Ravenne, d' après les huit tableaux de "notre invention, peints six fois plus grands "qu' ici représentés; taillés, expliqués en "vers, et ainsi marqués sur le papier, pour "en perpétuer le nombre, et en pouvoir "donner à nos parens et amis, par recon- "noissance, amitié et affection. Ce fait et "fini, âgés seulement l'un et l'autre de seize "années parfaites."

The dedication appears to have been written by the brother.

* This written memorandum, like the printed inscription, Papillon, it is to be regretted, has only given in French.

" light hatchings to indicate the shadows. At the bottom of each of " these prints, between the broad line or fillet which bounds the sub- " ject, and another parallel line, distant from it about the breadth of " a finger, are four Latin verses, engraved upon the block, which " poetically explain the subject; and above each is its title. " The impressions of all of them resemble that of the frontispiece; " being of a grey tint, and spotty; as if the paper had not been " damped or wetted before it was laid upon the engraved blocks. " The figures, which are passable in respect to their outlines, although " of a semi-gothic taste, are sufficiently well characterized and " draped; one may perceive by them, that, in Italy, the arts of " design were then beginning, by degrees, to experience melioration. " The names of the principal personages represented, are engraved " under their figures: as Alexander, Philip, Darius, Campaspe, and " others.

" FIRST SUBJECT. Alexander mounted on Bucephalus, whom he " has tamed. Upon a stone are these words: *Isabel. Cunio pinx.* " *et scalp.*

" SECOND SUBJECT. The passage of the Granicus: near the trunk " of a tree are engraved these words: *Alex. Alb. Cunio Equ. pinx.* " *Isabel. Cunio Scalp.*

" THIRD SUBJECT. Alexander cutting the Gordian knot. Upon " the pedestal of a column are these words: *Alexan. Albe. Cunio* " *Equ. pinx. et scalp.* This print is not so well engraved as the " preceding.

" FOURTH SUBJECT. Alexander in the tent of Darius. This print " is one of the best, both for composition and engraving, of the " whole set. Upon the border of a garment, the following words " are engraved: *Isabel. Cunio pinxit et scalp.*

" FIFTH SUBJECT. Alexander generously giving Campaspe, his " mistress, to Apelles, who was painting her picture. The figure of " this beauty is far from unpleasing. The painter appears trans- " ported with joy at his good fortune. At the bottom, upon a sort of

" antique tablet, are these words: *Alex. Alb. Cunio Eques. pinx. et*
" *scalp.*

" SIXTH SUBJECT. The famous battle of Arbella. Upon a hillock
" of earth are these words: *Alex. Alb. Equ. et Isabel. Cunio Pictor.*
" *et Scalp.* This also is one of the subjects, the best composed, de-
" signed, and engraved.

" SEVENTH SUBJECT. The vanquished Porus, conducted into the
" presence of Alexander. This design, independent of its merit, is
" very remarkable, as it is composed very much like that of the
" same subject by the celebrated Le Brun: one would almost think
" that he had copied this print. The figures of Alexander and
" Porus have equally an air of grandeur and magnanimity. Upon a
" stone, near a bush, are engraved these words: *Isabel. Cunio pinx.*
" *et scalp.*

" EIGHTH, AND LAST SUBJECT. The Glory and grand Triumph of
" Alexander, upon his entry into Babylon. This piece is also well
" composed, and was executed, like the sixth, by the brother and
" sister conjointly; as these characters, engraved at the foot of a
" wall, testify: *Alex. Alb. Equ. et Isabel. Cunio, Pictor. et Scalp.*
" This print has been torn at top: a piece, about three inches in
" length by one inch in height, is wanting.

" Upon the blank leaf, which follows this last print," continues Papillon, " are these words, badly written in old Swiss characters,
" with ink so pale that they are scarcely legible."

[Of course Papillon could not read Swiss—Mr. de Greder, therefore, translated them for him into French.]

" This precious book was given to my grandfather Jan. Jacq.
" Turine, a native of Berne, by the illustrious Count de Cunio,
" magistrate (podestà) of Imola, who honoured him with his liberal
" friendship. Of all the books I possess, I esteem it the most; on ac-
" count of the quarter from whence it came into our family, the
" science, the valour, the beauty of the amiable twins Cunio,
" and their noble and generous intention of thus gratifying their

" relatives and friends. Behold their singular and curious history, " in the manner in which it was several times related to me by " my venerable father, and according to which I have caused it " to be written more legibly than I myself could have done it.*

[The signature of this ancient possessor of the book does not appear.]

" That which follows," says Papillon, " is written with blacker " ink; but in the same kind of characters, although better " formed.

" The young and amiable Cunio, twin brother and sister, were " the first children of the son of the Count di Cunio, which he " had by a noble and beautiful Veronese lady, allied to the fa- " mily of Pope Honorius IV. when he was only a Cardinal. This " young nobleman had espoused this young lady clandestinely, " without the knowledge of the relations of either of them; who, " when they discovered the affair, by her pregnancy, caused the " marriage to be annulled, and the priest, who had married the two " lovers, to be banished. The noble lady, fearing equally the " anger of her father and that of the Count di Cunio, took refuge " in the house of one of her aunts, where she was delivered of " these twins. Nevertheless, the Count di Cunio, out of regard to " his son, whom he obliged to espouse another noble lady, per- " mitted him to bring up these children in his house, which was " done with every instruction and tenderness possible, as well on " the part of the Count, as on that of his son's wife, who con- " ceived such an affection for Isabella Cunio, that she loved and " cherished her as if she had been her own daughter; loving " equally Alessandro Alberico Cunio her brother, who, like his " sister, was full of talent, and of a most amiable disposition. " Both of them made rapid advances in various sciences, profiting

* The style of this memorandum, as given in the French, is also very unlike Papillon's usual manner of writing. It bears every mark of a cramped translation from old writing in another language. The same observation applies to the longer narrative which follows.

" by the instruction of their masters; but especially Isabella, who, " at thirteen years of age, was already considered as a prodigy; for " she perfectly understood and wrote Latin, composed verses, had " acquired a knowledge of geometry, was skilful in music, and " played upon several instruments: moreover, she was practised " in drawing, and painted with taste and delicacy. Her brother, " urged on by emulation, endeavoured to equal her; often, how- " ever, acknowledging, that he felt that he could never attain so " high a degree of perfection: he himself was, nevertheless, one " of the finest young men of Italy; he equalled his sister in beauty " of person, and possessed great courage, elevation of soul, and " an uncommon degree of facility in acquiring and perfecting him- " self in whatever he applied to. Both of them constituted the " delight of their parents, and they loved each other so perfectly, " that the pleasure or chagrin of the one, or the other, was di- " vided between them. At fourteen years of age this young gen- " tleman could manage a horse, was practised in the use of arms, " and in all exercises proper for a young man of quality; he also " understood Latin, and had considerable skill in painting.

" His father, having, in consequence of the troubles of Italy, " taken up arms, was induced, by his repeated solicitations, to " take him with him the same year," (viz. at the age of 14) " that, " under his eyes, he might make his first campaign. He was in- " trusted with the command of a squadron of twenty-five horse, " with which, for his first essay, he attacked, routed, and put to " flight, after a vigorous resistance, almost two hundred of the " enemy; but his courage having carried him too far, he unexpectedly " found himself surrounded by many of the fugitives; from whom, " nevertheless, with a valour not to be equalled, he succeeded in dis- " engaging himself, without sustaining any other injury than that of " a wound in his left arm. His father, who had flown to his sue- " cour, found him returning with one of the standards of the " enemy, with which he had bound up his wound: he embraced " him, full of delight at his glorious achievements, and, at the same

" time, as his wound was not considerable, and as he was desirous " to reward such great bravery upon the spot, he solemnly made " him a knight, (although he was already one by his birth,*) dub- " bing him in the same place where he had given such great proofs " of his extraordinary valour. The young man was so transported " with joy at this honour, which he received in the presence of " the troops commanded by his father, (who, in consequence of " the death of his father, which had recently happened, was now be- " come Count di Cunio,) that, wounded as he was, he instantly de- " manded the permission to go and see his mother; that he might " inform her of the glory, and of the honour which he had just " acquired; which was granted by the Count, the more readily, as " he was glad to have this opportunity of testifying to that noble " and afflicted lady, (who had always remained with her aunt a few " miles from Ravenna) the love and esteem which he ever con- " tinued to entertain for her; of which he certainly would have " given more solid proofs by re-establishing their marriage, and " by publicly espousing her, had he not felt it his duty to cherish " the wife his father had obliged him to marry, by whom he had " several children.

" The young Knight, therefore, immediately set out, escorted by " the remains of his troop, out of which he had eight or ten men " killed, or wounded. With this equipage, and these attendants, " who bore testimony to his valour wherever he passed, he arrived " at the residence of his mother, with whom he staid two days; " after which he repaired to Ravenna, to show a similar mark of re- " spect to the wife of his father, who was so charmed by his noble " actions, as well as by his attentions towards her, that she herself led " him by the hand to the apartment of the amiable Isabella, who, " seeing him with his arm bound up, was at first alarmed. He " remained a few days in this city; but, impatient to return to his

* Probably this expression in the original only meant that the young Cunio was a patrician by birth. The term " Cavaliere" (Knight) was anciently, perhaps, as it is now in Italy, synonymous with gentleman, or nobleman.

" father, that he might have an opportunity of distinguishing him-
" self in new exploits, he set off before his wound was yet healed.
" The Count reprimanded him for not having sent back his troop,
" and for not remaining at Ravenna till he was cured, and would
" not permit him to serve again during the rest of the campaign:
" shortly after, when his arm was perfectly healed, he sent him
" home, saying to him pleasantly, that he did not choose to be
" outdone by him all the remaining time that the troops would
" continue in action that year. It was soon after this, that Isabella
" and he began to compose and execute the pictures of the ac-
" tions of Alexander. He made a second campaign with his father,
" after which he again worked upon these pictures, conjointly with
" Isabella, who applied herself to reduce them, and to engrave them
" on blocks of woods. After they had finished and printed these pieces,
" and presented them to Pope Honorius, and to their other relations
" and friends, the Cavalier joined the army for the fourth time,
" accompanied by a young nobleman, one of his friends, called
" Pandulfio; who, enamoured of the lovely Isabella, was desirous
" to signalize himself, that he might become more worthy of her
" hand, before he espoused her. But this last campaign was fatal
" to the Cavalier Cunio: he fell, covered with wounds, by the side
" of his friend, who, whilst attempting to defend him, was also
" dangerously wounded. Isabella was so much affected by the
" death of her brother, which happened when he was not yet nine-
" teen, that she determined never to marry: she languished, and
" died when she had scarce completed her twentieth year. The
" death of this beautiful, and learned young lady, was followed by
" that of her lover, who had always hoped that his attentions and
" affection towards her would be rewarded by her consent, at
" length, to become his,—and also by that of her mother, who
" could not survive the loss of her beloved children. The Count di
" Cunio, who had been deeply afflicted by the death of his son,
" could scarcely support that of his daughter. Even the Countess
" di Cunio, who loved Isabella with great tenderness, fell ill of

" grief for her loss; and would have sunk under it, had she not " been supported by the manly fortitude of the Count. Happily " the health of the Countess was, by degrees, re-established. Some " years afterwards, the generous Count di Cunio gave this copy of " the actions of Alexander, bound* as it now is, to my grandfather; " and I have caused the leaves of paper to be inserted, upon which, " by my orders, this history was written."

[Papillon resumes his observations.]

" From the name of Pope Honorius IV. engraved on the frontis- " piece of these ancient prints of the actions of Alexander, it is " most certain that this precious monument of engraving on wood, " and of the art of taking impressions, was executed between the " years 1284 and 1285;† because that Pope, to whom it was " dedicated, governed the church only for the space of two years; " that is, from the second of April 1285, to the third day of the " same month in the year 1287: the epoch, therefore, of this ancient " specimen of engraving, is anterior to all the books, printed in " Europe, that have been hitherto known. Mr. Spirchtvel, the offi- " cer who was the possessor of this copy, and the friend of Mr. de " Greder, was one of the descendants of Jan. Jacq. Turine, who " was the ancestor of his mother. The death of Mr. de Greder " having taken place many years ago, I am unable to learn where " this book is at present to be seen, so that its authenticity might " be established to the satisfaction of the public, and that which " I have written be confirmed. It is, however, very probable that " the copy which was given to Pope Honorius, may be preserved in " the Library of the Vatican, at Rome."

* *Note of* PAPILLON *to this passage.* " This ancient and Gothic binding is made " of thin tablets of wood, covered with lea- " ther, and ornamented with flowered com- " partments, which appear simply stamped " and marked with an iron a little warmed, " without any gilding. It has not escaped " the attack of the worms: the cover has " been eaten by them into holes in many " places."

† *Papillon* should have said 1285—or 1286. It is possible, indeed, that the work was begun in 1284.

I will not add to the length of this extract, by transcribing the account that Papillon has left us of two other ancient books of wood engravings, which he saw, upon the same occasion, in the house of Mr. de Greder; as they had no marks from which their dates might be conjectured.* I shall proceed, with all due impartiality, to notice the opinions of different writers respecting the genuineness of the above interesting narrative; and to set forth, on the one hand, the arguments that may be advanced in its favour; and, on the other, the difficulties which oppose themselves to our belief of it.

I have already observed, that most authors (by which I mean more especially those who have treated on the subject of engraving) appear to have considered the whole account as absolutely spurious. Several of the German writers, indeed, are so well satisfied on this point, that they deem its very refutation unnecessary. Neither Heineken, in his "Idée Générale," and "Dictionnaire des "Artistes,"—nor Huber, in his "Manuel des Amateurs," nor Bartsch, in his "Peintre Graveur," have even deigned to notice it. It was enough, that Italy had dared to advance her claims to the invention of copper-plate engraving; that she should put forth pretensions to priority in wood engraving also, was too much to be borne. It would however be unfair to infer, that these writers withheld their pens, because they knew not how to disprove the evidence of Papillon and the Swiss officer;—no doubt they thought that so palpable a forgery, as they considered it, was best treated with silent contempt.

Heineken, I find, indeed, had mentioned the story in a previous work, although with such little alterations, as he thought requisite, to fit it for his purpose; for, instead of the name of Pope Honorius, in the dedicatory inscription, he inserted that of Pope Urban; and added, moreover, that Papillon, when he wrote the account, was only fourteen years of age; whereas it is certain that he was, at least, one and twenty.

* One of them contained figures of the Prophets and Sibyls; the other, the portraits of ancient Kings and Heroes.

These misrepresentations did not escape the censure of De Murr;* and Heineken, who, doubtless, considered some explanation necessary, afterwards wrote a long chapter on the subject of Papillon's book, and more especially on that writer's account of the two Cunio, which appeared in his work, printed in 1786, under the title of "Neue Nachrichten."

After a few general remarks, similar to those in his "Idée Générale," upon the folly and credulity of Papillon, and the numerous errors of his book; and an unsuccessful attempt to show that the honest eulogium, shortly before bestowed upon the French writer's labours, by some learned journalists of Germany, was no other than "satyr in disguise," he enters upon an elaborate examination of the subject in question. Through this examination it is unnecessary to accompany him, as the result of his inquiries may be sufficiently collected from the following extract.

"It will readily be imagined," says Heineken, "that during my "stay at Paris, throughout the year of 1769, I was very desirous to get "some more certain intelligence respecting these wood engravings. "That there was something wrong† about Papillon, I had, indeed, "a right to conclude from the general tenor of his book, and especially "from his description of these engravings, which I have faithfully "translated: nevertheless, I hoped to learn something further on

* *Christophe Theophile de Murr,* (Bibliotheque de Peinture, de Sculpture, et de Gravure; 2 vols. 12mo. Frankfort, 1770) after having given *Papillon*'s narrative of the two Cunio, verbatim, observes as follows—"Je ne "sçai pas pourquoi MR. DE HEINEKEN, "au second volume *Von Künstlern und* "*Kündstsachen,* p. xxxvi. cite si faussement ce trait curieux et remarquable. Au "lieu d' *Honore,* il met *Urbain;* il dit, que "*Mr. Papillon* étoit alors 14 ans. Mais il "en avoit au moins 21, étant né l'an 1698." Whether these blunders of *Heineken* originated in carelessness, or in design, I shall leave the reader to determine.

† *Heineken* takes some pains to show that poor *Papillon* was not in his right mind; and, amongst his other arguments for that purpose, quotes a passage from his book, t. 1. p. 335, in which he says, "*Par un accident et une fatalité commune à plusieurs graveurs,* aussi bien qu'à moi, *Le Fevre est devenu aliéné d' esprit:*" as if a little pleasantry of expression, such as the French writers, especially, have ever felt themselves at full liberty to indulge in, could really constitute fit grounds for a statute of lunacy.

" the subject in a conversation with himself: but when I repre-
" sented to him the extreme improbability of wood engravings
" having been executed at Imola, or Ravenna, in 1285; a thing
" mentioned by no Italian writer whatever; and also that the
" chronology of Pope Honorius IV., did not at all agree with that of
" Count Cunio; for that although the history of Ravenna did mention
" a Count Alberico Cunio, he did not live at the time of Honorius,
" but of Urban VI. and Martin V.; I could get nothing from
" him, except that he could not read the " *Old Latin, or Gothic*
" *Italian inscription* on the engraved frontispiece, and was absolutely
" ignorant in what language it was really written. That which he
" had written, he repeated, was merely a faithful record of what
" De Greder had dictated to him.

" Now, although, in my further researches," continues Heineken, " I could discover nothing more; for Bagneux is not far from
" Paris, and is often resorted to as a place of amusement; and
" although all the connoisseurs of Paris laughed at my talking about
" that Romance of Papillon, and Mr. Mariette, in particular, as-
" sured me that I should make myself ridiculous by even men-
" tioning Papillon, (for that I could not but know that HE (Mariette)
" *who was so thoroughly acquainted with Italy, must long ago have*
" *discovered such a work, had such a work, executed in* 1285, *existed,*)
" I am, nevertheless, still of opinion that such wood-cuts of the
" Life of Alexander the Great *do exist;* although not of the an-
" tiquity which Papillon supposed. There is no such book,
" engraved by the Count Cunio and his sister at Ravenna, and dedi-
" cated to Pope Honorius IV., to be found in the Vatican library;
" if I may rely on the information of the Counsellor Bianconi,
" and the prelate Bottari: but still there must be something true
" in Papillon's account; for, *from my knowledge of his character,*
" *and his manner, when I conversed with him, I am firmly per-*
" *suaded that he did not invent that which he told me.* That a
" history of Alexander the Great, engraved in wood after a ma-
" nuscript dedicated to Pope Honorius, might have been printed at

" the latter part of the fifteenth century, when such works were " most frequent; and that these wood-cuts might have been the " work of an engraver called Cunio, is by no means impossible; " especially as there really existed painters of that name at " Milan* . . . . . The Swiss Captain may answer for the ro- " mance about the twins."

Heineken cannot be accused of want of candour upon this occasion. He appears like a pleader, who, after having rigidly cross-examined a suspected witness, is at length convinced of his veracity. The reader will, however, soon find that he was himself in error, when he asserted that there was no Count Alberico Cunio in the time of Honorius the IVth; and will learn, in a subsequent chapter, how far he ought to bow before the boasted omniscience of Mariette. The truth is, that upon these, as upon all other subjects, much knowledge still remains to be obtained, even by him who knows the most.†

* Unfortunately, however, we have no account of any artist of the name of *Cunio* (always excepting the twins) until late in the sixteenth century.

† That *Mariette*, whose reading and erudition, upon all matters relating to the arts of design, were certainly very extensive, should now and then have forgot this maxim, (as upon the occasion of his conversation with Heineken) will hardly be wondered at, by any one who peruses the extravagant compliments lavished upon him by all the *cognoscenti* of his day; and more especially by the writers of Italy. The following specimen, extracted from a letter written by *Monsignor Bottari* to the editor of the Lives of the Painters, by *Giambattista Passeri*, and prefixed to that work, upon its publication at Rome, in 1772, in 4to, may suffice. After having bestowed a well-merited eulogium on the work in question, he says:

" The first account which I had of these " Lives, I received from the most learned " *Sig. Pietro Mariette;* who, in a letter " addressed to me, and printed at the begin- " ning of the sixth volume of the ' Lettere " Pittoriche,' at p. 10, says: *I have a Life* " *of Pietro da Cortona in MS. by Gio.* " *Battista Passeri, which is unfinished; and* " *that part of it which is done, is ill done.* " But let not this criticism of Monsieur " Mariette surprise you, for in matters of " this kind he is the most erudite and insati- " able (*incontentabile*) man now living, or, " perhaps, that ever did live; nor is it pro- " bable that there will ever be another pos- " sessed of a museum more rich in works of " this kind, or more interesting, as well for

Strutt mentions the story of the two Cunio, but considers it worthy of but little credit; an opinion, in the formation of which his own miscomprehension of the original French appears to have had no small share. "If this story be true," says he, "and such engravings "with the foregoing title ever did exist, they must have been ex- "ecuted in the years 1284 or 1285; for Honorius IV., to whom the "work is dedicated, sat only those two years in the Papal Chair. "But, as Papillon gives this story upon the sole evidence of the "Swiss officer, and had never seen any part of the engravings, "the generality of authors have not been inclined to give much "credit to the fact, which at best is exceedingly doubtful." * Now it is most evident, from Papillon's account, that he had seen these prints with his own eyes, and examined them at his leisure. The Swiss officer merely assisted him by deciphering and translating the inscriptions upon the frontispiece, and the manuscript history of the two Cunio, inserted at the end of the book, after the prints.

Padre della Valle, in his preface to the fifth volume of his edition of Vasari, (Siena, 1791 to 1794) gives Papillon's narrative at length, and shows no inclination to question its authenticity. "It would be "no matter of wonder," says he, "if at Ravenna, which, during the

"its printed books, as its manuscripts; which "treasures, had Passeri had an opportunity "of seeing them, would, doubtless, have en- "abled him to make this life of *Pietro da* "*Cortona* more elegant, more ample, more "correct, and more rich, as he did the "others," &c. Thus the injustice of the French critic's censure (for Passeri's work is deservedly admired) furnished an excellent opportunity for a highflown panegyric.

Heineken, it is to be observed, did not say one word of Papillon's story of the two Cunio; or of his *decided opinion*, that some work of wood engraving, like that described by Papillon, did exist, in his "Idée Générale," published two years after his visit to Paris: no doubt, lest Mariette, who was then alive, should laugh at him for imagining that such a work could have escaped *his* researches: but, in 1786, Mariette having then been more than ten years dead, he took courage, and boldly asserted the right to speak his own opinions!

* *Dictionary of Engravers.*—vol. ii. Essay, p. 13.

" middle ages, was the Athens of the fine arts, some one, amongst the " numerous artists, who flocked to it, not only from the different cities " of Italy, but also from countries on the other side of the Alps, " and even from Greece, should have invented the art of engraving " in wood for the purposes of impression."* Lanzi, I am obliged to confess, is not of the same opinion: he, indeed, mentions Papillon's account, but acknowledges " that it contains some things so

* He conjectures, indeed, that the term *alluminar*, used by Dante in speaking of Oderigo d'Agubbio, the miniature painter, (Canto xi. del Purgatorio).

O, dissi lui, non se tu Oderisi
L'honor d'Agobbio, et l'honor di quell' arte.
Ch' alluminar è chiamata in Parisi?

might include, in its meaning, the art of engraving the outlines of the figures, intended to be coloured, in wood; and, he observes, that " certain manuscripts of *Dante*, and in other " ancient books, are to be seen impressions," (he speaks of letters) " which appear to have " been made with engraved pieces of wood; " because we find in them that great degree " of regularity and resemblance, which, with- " out incredible labour and diligence, could " not be obtained by a pen directed by the " hand of any copyist, which cannot be, at " all times, equally firm and obedient."

Bullet had the same idea. See *Zani*, p. 178.

This extreme regularity in the characters of many old manuscripts has been often observed, and gives sufficient ground for the opinion, that some mechanical process was, at least occasionally, resorted to by the ancient Caligraphists. I think there is reason to believe, that stensils were often used by those who wrote the large choral books, containing the different services performed in the Roman Catholick churches; the smaller letters in which are, sometimes, above an inch in height: but I have not, hitherto, seen any old manuscript in which the letters appear to be *stamped* in the manner described by Padre della Valle.

As for the celebrated MS. of the four gospels, by Ulphilas, believed to be of the fourth or fifth century, and preserved in the library of Upsal, in Sweden; the characters of which are said to have been printed in gold and silver, on coloured parchment, by means of iron types heated; I can only say, that the account is entirely beyond my comprehension. I have not, indeed, read the learned dissertation which *M. Ihre*, a professor of eloquence at Upsal, wrote concerning this book. *Fournier* speaks of it, p. 98. *Papillon*, vol. i. p. 12 and 77. *Heineken* " Idée," p. 248: and *Jansen*, " Essai sur la Gravure," vol. ii. p. 18 and 162. But whatever method the old Caligraphists may have adopted, to procure uniformity in the size and shape of their letters, it does not, I think, appear to have had any influence in promoting the Art of Printing, whether from wooden blocks or with moveable types. The copyists of manuscripts, who lived by their pen, would, as *Heineken* observes, have been glad that Typography had never been invented.

" very hard to be believed, that he judges it the safest mode to say " nothing concerning it." *

Zani views the matter in a very different light. " The long and " particular description which Papillon gives of these prints," says he, " is an indubitable proof that he had viewed them, at his conve- " nience, with his own eyes—for we cannot suppose, that that " professor dreamed such a story, or that he intended to amuse " his readers with a romance of his own invention.

" I am aware," he adds, " that some amateurs will laugh at " Papillon, as well as at myself, for having been so easily induced " to believe him, and for thinking to bring forward, as an authentic " monument of the priority of Italy, even in wood engraving, a " work which no writer has hitherto known. It is impossible, " they will say, that there should be only one copy of it in the " world; and that this should have escaped the diligence of " the celebrated Fussli, the compiler of the great dictionary of " painters, and the countryman of M. Spirchlvel and M. de " Greder.

" He, however, who should reason in this manner," continues Zani, " might, upon the same grounds, deny the loss of many " manuscripts, and even of printed books, which, according to the " testimony of credible authors, have become a prey to the flames; " or have perished during the anarchy of revolutions, or the dis- " tresses occasioned by wars. The learned part of my readers will " not require examples. Nevertheless, let him, who wants such " conviction, search throughout all the libraries of Europe for the

* " Storia Pittorica," tom. i. p. 74. *Bassano.* 1795-6. It is probable, that if *Lanzi* had been informed of the circumstances which Zani afterwards discovered, relative to the family of Cunio, he would have formed a different opinion of the authenticity of Papillon's account. The truth is, that, in the absence of the proofs which Zani some time after published relative to *Finiguerra*'s discovery, he had enough to do to defend the pretensions of Italy, even to priority in copper-plate engraving.

" book, entitled 'Meditationes Reverendissimi patris domini Johannis " de Turrecremata,' printed at Rome by Ulric Han, in 1467, and he " will be presently informed by the learned librarians, that of that " edition there exists but one copy, which is preserved in the library " of Nuremberg.* This book is, therefore, unique. Now let " us suppose, that, by some accident, this book should perish; " could our descendants, on that account, deny that it had ever " existed?

" And what," continues our writer, " will those, who argue in " this manner, say, when they read in my large work,† that so great " is the rarity of ancient prints, that, notwithstanding my most " diligent search in the frequent journeys which I have under- " taken, I have not chanced to see two impressions of many en- " gravings of the fifteenth century, which, nevertheless, is an age far " less remote than that of Honorius IV.

" For my own part," adds Zani, " I confess that I give full be- " lief to the account of Papillon, because I find in it every mark of " truth. It is not a single print that he describes, but a series of " eight pieces, bearing in front of them a brief dedication, and " accompanied by Latin verses. He shows how those two noble " amateurs must have printed these engravings, by placing the " paper upon the blocks, and passing their hands over it, in lieu " of other modes of pressure. It is possible that, at this moment,

* " Unicum exemplum libri hujus rarissimi " quod hactenus detegi potuit, idque optime " conservatum, UNICA tanquam PHŒNIX " extat in bibliotheca publica Norimbergensi." *Panzer,* vol. ii. p. 407. n. 6. I have been informed, however, that the Imperial library at Vienna, also, possesses a copy of this book.

† A very extensive work relative to engraving, for which Zani has been collecting materials these thirty years. A detailed prospectus of the undertaking was first printed in 24mo. at Parma, 1789, under this title, " Prodromo di una Enciclopedia metodica delle Belle Arti spettanti al Disegno;" and is introduced, with some variations, in the latter part of his volume, entitled " Materiali," &c.

It is greatly to be wished, that the author may, at length, receive that general support which may enable him to publish the fruits of his long studies; since, however, like all other writers, he may have formed some erroneous judgments, there can be no doubt that his work will contain a large proportion of erudite and original matter.

" I may be blinded by my partiality to my own nation; but, I " would almost assert, that to deny the testimony of the French " writer, would be like denying the existence of light on a fine " sunshiny day." *

So much for opinions—let us now examine the evidence upon which this story rests.

The witness to the fact is but one. It behoves us, therefore, in the first place, to inquire if he be a witness worthy of credit; one, whose word can be taken; one, who, had he been interested in deceiving us, would, nevertheless, have told the truth.

In all these respects, the character of Papillon stands unimpeached; and we have seen that Heineken himself, the determined opposer of all Italian pretensions, bore testimony to the probity of the man, although he condemned his book. In his " Idée Générale," he had previously expressed himself to the same purport. Speaking of engraving in wood in Italy, he there observes, " that he cannot name any " artist of that country, who engraved in wood, before Ugo da " Carpi, Dominico Beccafumi, and Baldassar Peruzzi; painters, " who were nearly contemporaries, and who worked at the begin- " ning of the sixteenth century. What Marolles says of the en- " gravers upon wood in Italy, anterior to these masters," continues he, " is simple conjecture. Florent le Comte has copied his faults, " and Papillon has augmented them more than all the rest, in his " treatise upon engraving in wood; a work, of which the first vo- " lume (for I am not a competent judge of the second) is so filled " with errors, fables, and trivial matters, that it is not worth the " pains to refute them. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the " author, whose character I am well acquainted with, believed " all that he wrote, and erred only from ignorance." † Papillon was, therefore, an *honest* writer.

* *Zani.* " Materiali per servire alla storia, &c. dell' Incisione in Rame e in Legno." Parma, 1802. 8vo. pp. 84, 85, 86.

† " Idée Générale," pp. 150, 151. " Cependant je suis convaincû que l'auteur, " dont je connois le caractere, a écrit tout " cela de bonne foi, sans en savoir davan- " tage."

But, although honest in his testimony, would not such a person as Heineken has described Papillon, be very liable to be deceived? To this simple question, it seems reasonable to answer, Yes! But was Papillon really so ignorant, so misinformed on the subject he treated of, as Heineken's judgment would lead us to suppose? Is the German writer's sweeping condemnation of his book to be admitted as just, without examination? Was he himself a judge so competent, that from his sentence there should be no appeal?

It must indeed be admitted, that Papillon's work contains an ample proportion of error. He wrote at a period when little had been done towards the investigation of the early history of engraving by other authors. He copied many of the mistakes of the French writers who preceded him, and, perhaps, added some of his own. Zealous for the honour of his art, he was induced, upon very slight evidence, to insert, amongst the professors of wood engraving, many eminent designers who, it is probable, never handled a burin. But it is remarkable, that upon the very occasion which Heineken selected to pass so severe a sentence upon Papillon, the latter was right, and the former wrong. Heineken says, he cannot name any artist of Italy who engraved in wood prior to Ugo da Carpi, Domenico Beccafumi, and Baldassar Peruzzi. The first of these can hardly be supposed to have begun to engrave before 1510, and most probably did not engrave till after that period. Beccafumi certainly did not practise engraving till much later in the century; and as for the third, the contemporary and countryman of Beccafumi, there is some reason, at least, to doubt whether he engraved at all. Now there is no difficulty in pointing out Italian engravings on wood, anterior to these masters, some bearing the marks* of the artists by which they were executed, and others, their names. Of

* Witness the old Italian artist, who engraved both on wood and in copper, and marked his prints with the initials I. B. accompanied with the figure of a bird. He will be spoken of in his proper place.

the latter description, Papillon mentions a large wood print, somewhat in the style of Mantegna, and certainly Italian, of a subject of the Roman history, allegorically represented, and inscribed OPUS IACOBI; and another large wood engraving, representing the Madonna, S. Sebastian, and S. Rock, inscribed IACOBUS; whom he considers, and, probably, with some reason, a different artist from the foregoing.* Heineken, it is possible, never saw these prints; or, if he did, mistook them for the productions of another school. The print of the "Madonna with the two Saints," if it be, as I think, one that I have seen (and shall, I hope, have an opportunity of describing hereafter) is decidedly old Italian. The other I am unacquainted with. I will only, therefore, at present observe, that in the British Museum there is a set of circular prints of subjects from the New Testament, one of which bears this inscription, *Opus Iacobi.* They are indisputably †Ita-

* *Papillon.* Tom. I. p. 140.

† Since writing the above, I find in Heineken's Neue Nachrichten (a work published by him fifteen years after his "Idée Générale) at p. 123, the following title to a set of 12 large prints of the Triumphs of Julius Cæsar:—"*Triumphus Caji Julii Caesaris, qui quinquies triumphavit. Primum et excellentissimum egit Gallicum. Sequentem Alexandrinum. Deinde Ponticum, Proximum Africanum, Novissimum Hispaniensem. Edidit spectacula varii generis, a quo deinde Romanorum Principes Caesares atque Imperatores appellati sunt* —— —— ——*Manibus propriis hoc praeclarum opus in lucem prodire fecit, Jacobus Argentoratensis, Germanus, Archetypus Solertissimus, anno virginei partus* M. D. III. *idibus Februarii sub hemispherio Veneto finem imposuit.*"

Not having had an opportunity of seeing the original from which this inscription is taken, I am unable to satisfy the curiosity of the reader as to that part of it which Heineken appears to have thought proper to omit. But I happen to possess in my own collection, two pieces which I suspect may be a part of the above Triumphs. They have neither the name nor mark of the designer or the engraver; but are very much in the manner of the circular prints in the British Museum, mentioned in the text. The style of them, however, is decidedly *Old Italian*, as well as respects their design, as the mode in which they are executed. The artist, therefore, whoever he was, properly belongs to the Italian school; notwithstanding he may have been of German origin, or even a native of Strasburg; since it is evident, from his style, that he must have learned the principles of his art in Italy. I consequently still feel myself justified in leaving the passage in the text as I had originally written it; more especially, as it is not proved that both the Jacobi were the same

lian, and of the old dry taste of the XVth century. I shall describe them in a future chapter.

The French writer, therefore, did not merit the unqualified censure with which Heineken treated him. The materials of his work may be ill arranged, and his book badly written; but he does not appear in the light of a person wholly incapable of judging of the merits, or of the school, or of the antiquity, of any work of wood engraving which might come under his cognizance. Papillon, indeed, from his infancy* had begun to collect materials for illustrating the history of his favorite art, of which, as is well known, he became a professor of some eminence; having been instructed in it by his father, who was also an engraver on wood. This practical experience, combined with research, could not but give him great advantages, and render him the less liable to be deceived in his decisions.

His remarks, indeed, although it is still to be regretted that he was not more particular in his description of the compositions of these prints, and the number and situations of the figures in each, and that he did not give us the inscriptions upon them in their original language, are those of a man well accustomed to examine ancient prints. The blocks, he says, appeared to have been printed by means of the pressure or friction of the hand, with a light tint of indigo, *in distemper:* he describes the impressions to be granulous, if I may be allowed the term, in some places; as if the paper had

person; and, as Heineken's expression is, "Ce que *Marolles* dit des graveurs *sur bois* EN ITALIE, avant ces maîtres, n'est qu'une conjecture," &c. In his "Neue Nachrichten," indeed, p. 151, he observes, that the Italian wood engravers of the XVth century more frequently inscribed their works with names than those of Germany; and, upon this occasion, he most unaccountably speaks of *Nicolo Vicentino,* (whom he considers the same with *Boldrinus,*) *Dom. Beccafumi, Baldassare Peruzzi, Ugo da Carpi,* and *Antonio da Trento,* as being, all of them, Artists of the XVth *century,* instead of the XVIth. Might not *Papillon,* had he read the passage, have retorted upon the German writer, by applying what he had said of *Le Fevre:* "*Qu'il étoit devenu aliéné d'esprit?*"

* *Papillon,* tom. i. p. 374.

been applied to the engraved block without being first damped. Now it is well known, that many of the very early wood prints were printed without any mixture of oil in the colour used for the purpose; and there is good reason, likewise, to believe, that the paper was often applied in its dry* state. The observations of Papillon are, therefore, not only evidence that he saw and examined these prints with great attention, but that his eye was habituated to very nice discrimination, touching all those particulars which, perhaps more than any others that could be named, are guides to enable us to judge of the antiquity of wood engravings. He was consequently a *competent* witness.

The probity of Papillon's character seems to preclude the idea that, in his account of the two Cunio, he had any intention to deceive. Nevertheless, had these two ancient amateurs been of French extraction, some motive at least for a forgery might have been assigned; as it is, there appears none. But, putting France out of the question, he shews no desire to exalt the pretensions of Italy at the expense of Germany; for of the two ancient books of wood cuts which he saw at the same time with that of "the Actions of Alexander," one is described to be German;† and, indeed, in another part of his book, he awards to Germany the honor of having first practised the art of engraving in chiaro-scuro;‡ although Italy, on

* The shining appearance of the backs of those old wood engravings which were taken off by friction, is, I think, a strong evidence that the paper was commonly used dry. Wet paper could hardly have supported the violence of the friction which appears to have been applied, and would not, I think, have been capable of receiving such a polish. Besides, the impressions being taken off with distemper, or water colour, this colour, if the paper had been used damp, would have run, and prevented the desired neatness and precision in the impression.

† It may not be irrelevant to observe, that Heineken bears testimony to the existence of the other two books of old wood engravings which Papillon saw at the house of De Greder, in company with that of "the Actions of Alexander."

‡ The mode practised by *Ugo da Carpi* and others, by which the effect of chiaro-scuro drawings is produced by means of two, three, or more blocks of wood, printed with different tints, one after the other, upon the same paper.

the authority of Vasari, had long laid claim to that invention. The story, moreover, is given by him as an insulated fact: it makes no part of a favorite system; nor is any hypothesis founded upon it. He, therefore, certainly wrote, as Heineken expresses it, *de bonne foi.*

There is, I think, no ground for the suspicion that M. de. Greder, the Swiss officer, prepared this book for the purpose of deceiving the young French artist; nor is it likely, considering the nature of Papillon's studies, that such a trick could have been practised upon him. It was by accident that de Greder, one afternoon, found the young man looking into one of his books; upon which he took occasion to shew him some very ancient ones, lent to him by his friend Mr. Spirchtvel; and they got into conversation upon the antiquity of engraving in wood.

Here is no appearance of premeditation or design on the part of de Greder: the occurrence was evidently unexpected.

It was *then* that Papillon first saw the book containing the Actions of Alexander. I say that he first saw it, because if, as he tells us, he wrote the long manuscript account of the Cunio family, as translated and dictated to him by M. de Greder, it could hardly have been finished in the remainder of that afternoon. The inscription upon the title-page, however, and the short memorandum written on the same leaf, no doubt immediately called his attention. Nor can it be easily supposed that Papillon's scholarship was insufficient to enable him to make out, at least, the proper names of Alexander, Pope Honorius IV. and the two Cunio; even without the assistance of De Greder who, it seems most probable, immediately gratified him by translating the contents of "the printed dedication;" and afterwards (although, as he says, with difficulty) "the short written memorandum" respecting the necessity of hollowing out the blocks deeper in those places where the paper was intended to be white in the impression.

Now if no fraud was practised by Papillon upon the public, nor by M. de Greder upon Papillon, nor by M. Spirchtvel upon his friend De Greder, and no motive for such fraud can be assigned, it must

then be acknowledged that the whole story is supported by a chain of evidence not easily to be broken; for the book came to Spirchtvel through his mother, who was the direct descendant of Jan Jacq. Turine, the person to whom the Count di Cunio, the father of the twins, presented it, some years after their death.

But the supposition that the whole could have been a forgery, is still more satisfactorily refuted by the circumstances recorded in the dedication of the work to Pope Honorius IV., and the subsequent history of the two Cunio, the authors of it, in ancient manuscript; the very length of which renders it impossible to be believed that it was forged, as Heineken would have us suppose, for the purpose of giving a spurious attestation of the antiquity of the engravings; since a few lines would have answered the same purpose, and have furnished less means of detecting the deceit in future.

Heineken, as we have seen, thought he had discovered internal evidence of forgery, both in the printed dedication and in the manuscript history; and urged in proof of it, in his conversation with Papillon, that Count Alberico Cunio lived in the time of Pope Urban VI. and Martin V., and not in that of Honorius IV. But he was mistaken; since a Count Alberico Cunio is expressly mentioned in the History of Faenza, under the year 1285—the same in which Honorius was made Pope; and indeed the name of Alberico appears to have been a favorite Christian name in the family.

The name of Cunio was not likely to have occurred to the Swiss officers, or any one else, meditating a forgery like that alleged; since, although noble, and of high antiquity, it was not of sufficient note to find a place in general history, and is not once mentioned in the extensive work of "the Annals of Italy," by Muratori.

In the dedication of the engravings in question, we have seen the name of Alessandro Alberico Cunio coupled with Ravenna; and, in the manuscript history, the Count di Cunio, the father of the twins, is described as being afterwards magistrate of Imola. Now both these cities are in the vicinity of Faenza, where the family, or

a branch of it, is spoken of by writers of undoubted credit in the XIIth, the XIIIth, and the XIVth centuries.* These circumstances, therefore, far from furnishing any just motive of additional doubt,

* The indefatigable *Zani*, whose opinion on the subject has been already noticed, after having given the French writer's account of the two *Cunio*, proceeds as follows:—(Materiali, &c. p. 233.)

" Behold," says he, " that which *Papillon* " has left us respecting the twins of the " family of *Cunio*. Let the learned seri- " ously consider the subject, that it may be " determined whether this account is deserv- " ing of being classed amongst the fabulous " narrations of a writer of romance; or whe- " ther it merits belief, and is worthy of the " most scrupulous examination.

" In the mean time I will present them " with certain notices that I have happened " to find in two other writers, respecting the " family of *Cunio*. *Biondo Flavio* (His- " toriæ ab inclinatione Romanorum Imperii " decades tres . . . . . Venetiis, 1483) men- " tions this family in several places, saying, at " fol. 85, that ' *multos habuit belli Duces*;' " and he affirms that in 1380 he knew the " famous Captain, Count *Alberico Cunio*, " who was still living in 1401.

" *Giulio Cesare Tonduzzi*, in his *Historie* " *di Faenza*, printed in 1675, makes mention " at p. 191, under the year 1149, of the " Count *Guido Cunio*; and, at p. 322, he " relates that *Onorius* IV. of the family *Sa-* " *villi* was elected Pope on the 2d of April " in year 1285, in which year there happened " a memorable affair at *Faenza* between the " two families of the House of *Manfredi*.

" The circumstances of this affair were as " follow:—The *Frate Alberico, Cav. Gau-* " *dente*,* having received a blow on the face " from *Manfredo*, of the same family, pre- " tended to be reconciled towards him, and " afterwards invited him one day to dinner, in " company with *Alberghetto*, his son. The " dinner being ended, the revengeful *Alberico* " called out: ' let the fruit come;' upon which " signal, his two sons, *Francesco* and *Ugolino*, " rushed forth; and, with the assistance of cer- " tain domesticks, killed the two guests with " their daggers. *In consequence of which* " *affair, the enmity which had subsisted* " *between the murderers and the* COUNT " ALBERICO CUNIO, *son of the Count* " BERNARDINO DI CUNIO, *in regard of* " *Beatrice his wife, who was the daughter,* " *and the sister of the two Manfredi who* " *were killed, was renewed with increased* " *acrimony*.

" The same writer," adds *Zani*, " relates, " at p. 441, that the family of *Cunio* re- " moved in the course of time from *Romagna* " to *Lombardy*; and that, when he wrote, it " flourished, as it still continues to do, in " *Milan*; ranking amongst the most noble fa- " milies of that city, and known by the appella- " tion of the *Conti di Belgioioso*. At p. 473, " under the year 1419, he speaks of the Count

* An order of knighthood then used in Italy, not very unlike that of the Knights Templars. *Bettinelli* calls it the Order of *Frati Gaudenti*, " Risorgimento " d'Italia dopo il Mille." tom. ii. p. 335, 8vo. *Bassano*, 1786.

form together, such a phalanx of corroborative evidence in support of the story, as, in my opinion, those who would impeach the truth of Papillon's statement, can never break through.

The objections, on the other hand, which oppose themselves to our belief of the story, are, it must be allowed, sufficiently formidable in their appearance; but they are not conclusive or unanswerable. They are chiefly as follow:

FIRST.—The relation of Papillon, it may be said, goes to establish the practice of engraving in wood, and of taking impressions from engraved blocks of wood in Italy, as early as the thirteenth century; whereas no satisfactory ground for the belief that such a practice prevailed in Europe, even so early as the fourteenth century, had hitherto been produced; and it is scarcely to be credited that such an art should have been known in Europe at so early a period

" *Alberico Cunio* the younger; and, at fol. " xlix. he places in the list of the *Podesta*, " the *Consuls*, and the Governors of Faenza " for the year 1315, a Count *Bernardino* " *Cunio*.

" In the notices which I have here col- " lected," continues Zani, " there is nothing, " it is true, respecting the two twins of the " family of *Cunio;* nevertheless, we may, " I think, conjecture from these documents, " that that Count *Alberico*, who, in regard of " his wife *Beatrice*, was desirous to avenge " the death of his father-in-law and his bro- " ther-in-law, might have been the father of " the amiable twins *Alessandro Alberico* and " *Isabella*.

" *Tonduzzi* asserts, that, in the same year " in which *Honorius* IV. was elected Pope, " the enmity between the murderers and the " Count *Alberico Cunio* was renewed; and " *Papillon* has told us, that the troubles of " Italy occasioned the Count *Cunio* to take " up arms; and that the two twins dedicated " their work to *Honorius* IV. We read in " the Italian writer, that *Beatrice*, the wife " of Count *Alberico*, was of the House of " *Manfredi;* that is, one of the first families " of Faenza; and we learn from the French " author, that the father of the Count *Cunio* " obliged his son to divorce the Veronese " lady, whom he had clandestinely married, " and to take for his consort one of a higher " class of nobility. It is not improbable that " this was *Beatrice*.

" Let not the lovers of art in *Imola*, " *Faenza*, and *Ravenna*," adds *Zani*, " omit " to consider and compare that which has " been written by the two authors whom " I have cited; and let them use their most " strenuous endeavours to establish a point so " conducive to the glory of their country, by " illustrating the history of the two twins of " the family of *Cunio*, and placing so interest- " ing a discovery in a clear light."

as the thirteenth century, and that for more than a century afterwards we should find no trace of its use.

It was doubtless a strong feeling of this objection which occasioned Heineken, in his "Neue Nachrichten," p. 109, to suggest the opinion, that the book of "the Actions of Alexander" might have been engraved by some Italian artist of the XVth century, from a manuscript, ornamented with designs, which had been written, and dedicated to Pope Honorius, two centuries before. But the difficulties which stand in the way of such a conclusion are even greater than those which it was intended to remove.

A work of this subject was very unlikely to have been dedicated to the Head of the Church in those early times; except, as is stated in the dedication, in testimony of affection from the youthful twins, his relatives; who might, not unreasonably, be supposed to have selected for their theme, the prowess of the Macedonian Chief, as the first name of one of them was Alexander, and as he had embraced the profession of a soldier.

But it is surely extremely improbable that, in the XVth century, when the arts of design in Italy had advanced many steps towards their perfection, and where better originals were, in consequence, easy to be procured, an engraver of that country should have thought of copying a series of designs of the XIIIth century; and *that* series, not representing any sacred legend, to which the antiquity of the original might have been supposed to give weight and authority, but a fanciful delineation of the actions of Alexander the Great.

Still more improbable it is, that the engraver of such a work (supposing the manuscript to have been originally dedicated to Pope Honorius IV. by the two Cunio, or by any body else) should have preserved a dedication made to a person who had been dead two hundred years before: and even then it will be necessary, before Heincken's conjecture can be supported, to insist that the printed dedication was ignorantly, or intentionally, mistranslated by De Greder—that Papillon could not even read the proper names engraved on the dedication, and on the eight pieces which followed it—and that

the whole of the manuscript history, which it has been shewn bears every mark of authenticity, was an impudent forgery, executed with great labour and research (for the author of it, as we have seen, was better acquainted with the history of the Cunio family than Heineken) to serve no earthly purpose whatever, except that of practising a silly, and temporary deception, upon a young artist. For, if it was a forgery, De Greder died without any further enjoyment of his joke; as poor Papillon mislaid his papers, and his book did not make its appearance until thirty-five years afterwards!

Besides, the objections to "a Block-book," printed in the XVth century in Italy (and the union of text with the figures certainly entitles the work in question to that appellation) are nearly as great as to a similar book supposed to be of the XIIIth century; since no other work of the kind, executed in Italy, whether of the XIIIth, XIVth, or XVth century, is on record.

Leaving aside, therefore, the untenable hypothesis of Heineken, I would observe, in answer to the *first* objection, that we cannot safely argue, from the silence of contemporaneous authorities, that the art of engraving in wood was not practised in Europe in those early times; however such silence may be an argument that it was not an art in high repute. Nor is our ignorance of such records a sufficient proof of their non-existence. As an illustration of the truth of this remark, it will be enough to observe, that, were it not for the accidental discovery, made towards the end of the last century, of a decree of the magistracy of Venice, particularly relating to engraving in wood, and bearing date 1441, we might to this day have been without any positive proof that that art was practised in Italy previous to 1467; in which year the first book* printed there with wood-cuts made its appearance. Now the decree in question, which I shall presently produce, carries the art back at least to the beginning of the century; and gives, I think, good reason for us to

* The Meditations of I. de Turrecremata before mentioned: see p. 29.

suppose, that it was practised by the Venetians long previous to that epoch.

It may be added, that the art of engraving in wood is never spoken of by old historians as *a new discovery*, or *as a new art;* and that, for aught we know, it might have been commonly applied to the purpose of furnishing devotional cuts of saints, and other objects of superstition, to the common people, throughout Christendom, for a very considerable time previous to its use in the manufacture of playing cards; a purpose, to which, nevertheless, there seems some reason to believe that it was applied early in the XIVth century. Nor is it any proof, or strong argument against the antiquity of such a practice, that authentic specimens of wood engraving of those early times are not now to be found. They were, it may be supposed, for the most part, detached pieces; whose merits, as works of art, were not such as to render their preservation at all probable. They were the toys of the day; and, after having served the temporary purpose for which they were manufactured, were, no doubt, swept away to make room for others of newer fashion; especially in Italy, where the advancement of the arts of design was far more rapid than in any other country; and where taste soon became refined.

Indeed, the Italian artists, who lived in times when art was approaching towards perfection, or had attained its zenith, despised the rude productions of earlier centuries; and there is reason to believe that the chief cause of the extreme rarity of most of the Italian engravings on copper, of the XVth century, was the little respect with which those first essays of the art were treated by such as lived to admire the more perfect productions of Marc' Antonio.

Vasari even, when speaking of the engravings of Andrea Mantegna—which, though in a dry style, are admirable in their way—thus expresses himself: " e ne fù allora tenuto conto, perche non " si era veduto meglio."—" And they were then held in estimation," (or taken care of) " because people had not yet seen better." Baldinucci, in like manner, in his Life of Sandro Botticelli, informs us,

that " that artist engraved many plates from his own designs, which, " in the course of time, were, for the most part, destroyed, or sup- " pressed, in consequence of the great improvement which took " place in the art of engraving after his time." And yet Mantegna and Botticelli were both, in their day, masters of high reputation. It can, therefore, be no matter of wonder if the Italians omitted to preserve the rude works of their early engravers in wood, with the same care as appears to have been bestowed by the less polished Germans, in the XVth century, upon the barbarous productions of their school, by pasting them into the covers of their manuscripts. Some few specimens of early Italian wood engraving, however, happily still exist, as will be presently shewn; and others, it is probable, may be hereafter discovered.

The next, and SECOND objection, that the book, which Papillon has described, is not to be found, and that nobody has seen another copy of it, has been already answered by Zani. As a further answer to that objection, it may not be irrelevant to remind the reader, that the two Cunio appear only to have taken off *a very limited number* of impressions from their engravings, as presents to their near friends and relations; whereas, of " the Meditations of I. de " Turrecremata," and, indeed, of some other printed books, *of which not even one copy* is now known*, there is every reason to suppose that a *considerable impression* was published.

The youth of the two noble amateurs, by whom these prints are said to have been executed, may be urged as a THIRD objection to the truth of the story. The whole, it may be said, borders on romance.

In answer to this objection, I must observe, that, taken in one point

* The DONATUS, for example, printed by SWEYNHEYM and PANNARTZ, in 1464, (as is supposed) and of which 300 copies were published. " Not a *single copy* of this " work is known, or has been described." So says Mr. Dibdin: *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, vol. i. p. 160. The list of printed books, of which only one copy is known, might probably be augmented; and others might perhaps be mentioned, of which fragments only have been discovered.

of view, it is a strong evidence that Papillon's narrative is no forgery. That he, or the Swiss officers, supposing the prints to have been forged by either of them, with the intent to deceive, should, instead of looking out for the name of some ancient artist to whom to ascribe them, have pitched upon the names of Alessandro Alberico and Isabella Cunio—two persons of noble family residing at Ravenna—(and those so young, that that circumstance alone was calculated to give an air of improbability to the tale which it was intended should be believed) is not within the range of credibility. This apparent objection, therefore, to the truth of the story, becomes, upon due consideration, a powerful argument in its favour.

Not that the record itself can be shaken upon the ground that such an account of early talents is incredible. Several of the finest and most finished engravings of Lucas Van Leyden were executed before he had completed his fifteenth year;* and the history of the arts furnishes many examples of early powers little less surprising.

A FOURTH objection, founded upon the alleged merit of some of these prints of the Actions of Alexander, I must own, struck me, upon my first perusal of Papillon's narrative, with much greater force than any of the above; and especially the resemblance which that writer discovered between one of them and a picture of Le Brun representing the same subject. In answer to this I would observe, that it is no easy matter, in treating of works of art, to find terms by which the exact share of merit possessed by any individual performance is to be expressed. We are naturally inclined to be liberal in our praises of that which, however defective,

* All writers agree, that *Lucas van Leyden* was born at the end of May, or the beginning of June, 1494, and that he died in 1533. His "Conversion of St. Paul," one of his largest and most esteemed prints, is dated 1509; but a great number of his engravings are supposed to have been executed before that period. His print of "Sergius, killed by Mahomet," as it is called, is *dated* 1508. He is said to have astonished the artists of the time by a picture of S. Hubert, painted when he was only twelve years of age. The very number of his works, considering their high finish, and the shortness of his life, is, of itself, little short of miraculous.

is better than we could have expected from the artist, or from the period in which he lived; and it is well known that even Vasari, a much greater artist, and incomparably a better writer than Papillon, was obliged, at the close of his voluminous work, to apologize for this his bias on the side of mercy.* The resemblance which Papillon discovered, or thought he discovered, between one of these prints and a picture of Le Brun, may be accounted for in one, who, like him, was accustomed to venerate that which he knew to be ancient, by the supposition of some accidental, although probably only partial, similitude in the situations or attitudes of some of the principal figures. As to his eulogiums, it may be sufficient to observe that he was better fitted to judge of the mechanism of the art he practised, than qualified to estimate the merits of an extensive historical composition in painting; and, moreover, that, when he wrote this account, he was a very young man.

Thus much for Papillon's interesting narrative respecting the two Cunio: a document—for so, I think, I may now term it—from which we learn, that engraving in wood was practised as early as the THIRTEENTH CENTURY, in those parts of Italy, at least, which border upon the Gulf of Venice. The examination of this document has necessarily occupied many pages. The importance of the fact to be ascertained will, however, it is trusted, be admitted in extenuation of the writer.

* *L'Autore a gli Artefici del Disegno*, inserted, after *Vasari*'s own life, at the end of the last volume. *Edizione* di Bologna, 1648. "To those to whom it should appear," says he, "that I have praised certain masters, "whether ancient or modern, beyond their "deserts; and who, upon comparing such "ancient artists with those of our own time, "should feel disposed to laugh; I can only "answer, that I have judged it proper to "bestow praise not merely in proportion to "the simple merit of the work I speak of, "but also with a reference to the time and "place in which it was executed, or other "particular circumstances attending it, &c." "Besides," adds *Vasari*, "one cannot always "hold the balance of the goldsmith in one's "hand; and those who have experienced the "difficulties of writing, especially when comparisons are to be made, which are always "odious, and when it is necessary to pass "judgment, will readily be induced to excuse "me, &c."

The distance between this epoch of wood engraving, and the next of which we have any record, is, indeed, formidable. Time may, perhaps, restore those links of the chain which are at present wanting. *

* I am much inclined to consider the well-known entry in a register of accounts of the French court, about 1392, relative to the cards made by *Jacquemin Gringonneur* for Charles VI., as a document proving the use of wood engraving at that time; and, indeed, from the manner in which cards are spoken of in a French romance *finished* in 1341, I think we may reasonably conjecture that they were manufactured from engraved wooden blocks, in France, even in the early part of the fourteenth century. Both these documents, together with my reasons for the above opinion, will appear in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

The Decree of the Government of Venice, 1441—Specimens of Old Venetian Wood Engraving described—Supposition that the Venetians obtained this Art from the Chinese, at a very early period—and that other European Nations discovered the Secret in the course of their Traffick with Venice—the Art, perhaps, improved in Germany—Silence of old writers, with respect to Wood Engraving, accounted for—No evidence that it was invented in Europe—Opinion of those, who ascribe its Origin to the Invention of Playing Cards, unsupported by Evidence—Remarks on the early Use of Playing Cards—Early Wood Engravings of Germany, and the Low Countries—Specimens described—St. Bridget—A Print preserved at Lyons, dated 1384—doubtful—St. Christopher, 1423, the earliest Print with a Date, of which there is no doubt—Its Companion, the Annunciation: Reasons for suspecting these two Prints to be Italian. Other ancient Wood Engravings, with Dates, &c.

THE next written document that I find, in which positive mention is made of wood engraving, is a Decree of the Government of Venice; which Temanza,* an architect of that city, had the good

* I know not upon what authority *Lanzi*, tom. i. p. 75. asserts that we owe the discovery of this document to Zanetti; since it appears to have been first noticed by Temanza, and published in a letter, addressed by him to the Count ALGAROTTI, inserted in the *Lettere Pittoriche*, tom. v. pag. 320. Indeed *Temanza* expressly tells *Algarotti* (p. 322) that this discovery is the first fruit of the labour which he had bestowed in reading great part of the ancient laws of the old company of Venetian painters, from which he had made a selection then in his possession. It is worthy of remark, that he produces this decree as a proof that engraving was practised in Venice before the time of *Finiguerra*; making no distinction between the art of wood engraving, and that of engraving in copper. "*Cose tutte*," says he, "*assai anteriori di* "*tempo al predetto* MASO (FINIGUERRA)."

fortune to discover amongst the archives of the old company of Venetian painters. It has already been briefly noticed, and is as follows:

" M CCCC XLI. October the 11th. Whereas the art and mys-
" tery of making cards and printed figures, which is used at
" Venice, has fallen to total decay; and this in consequence of
" the great quantity of playing cards, and coloured figures printed,
" which are made out of Venice; to which evil it is necessary
" to apply some remedy; in order that the said artists, who are a
" great many in family, may find encouragement, rather than
" foreigners. Let it be ordered and established, according to that
" which the said masters have supplicated, that, from this time
" in future, no work of the said art, that is printed or painted on
" cloth, or on paper, that is to say altar pieces (or images *) and
" playing cards, and whatever other work of the said art is done
" with a brush and printed, shall be allowed to be brought or im-
" ported into this city, under pain of forfeiting the works so
" imported, and xxx. livres and xii. soldi; (pag. 6) of which
" fine, one third shall go to the state, one third to the Signori
" Giustizieri Vecchi, to whom the affair is committed, and one
" third to the accuser. With this condition, however, that the
" artists, who make the said works in this city, may not expose
" the said works to sale in any other place but their own shops,
" under the pain aforesaid, except on the day of Wednesday
" at S. Paolo, and on Saturday at S. Marco, under the pain
" aforesaid."

* *Ancona* (an altarpiece), probably a corruption of ΕΙΚΩΝ *icon*, an image. It may appear to admit of a doubt, whether the introduction of foreign *pictures* as well as *prints*, was not intended to be prohibited by this decree. I, however, think not.

Cloth was seldom used for painting upon 'till the sixteenth century: I say seldom, because I have seen a small number of Italian pictures of the fifteenth century which were painted on cloth; but none so early as 1440.

It is not improbable, that some of the coloured wood prints above alluded to were of a large size, and, perhaps, printed on several sheets of paper; and that, in consequence, it became necessary that they should be pasted on canvasses, before they were coloured, and hung up as furniture.

Then follows the subscription of the Proveditori del Comune, and that of the Signori Giustizieri Vecchi. *

The Italian † writers argue, and I think fairly, that this decree is of itself good evidence of wood engraving having been practised at Venice, at least as early as the commencement of the fifteenth century. The time that must have elapsed, say they, from the first introduction of wood engraving into Venice, to its full establishment—when it furnished, perhaps, an article of beneficial commerce, and certainly afforded the means of subsistence to a very numerous body of artisans who practised it—cannot be computed at less than twenty or thirty years; nor can a shorter period be supposed to have elapsed from that epoch till the year 1441; when it is described to have fallen, as if gradually, into little less than a total decay.

* Nella vecchia matriccola di questi nostri pittori, (" Ella sa," says Temanzi, writing to the Count Algarotti, " che qui s' appella matricola il libro delle leggi di catuua delle arti,) al capo xxxiii. si legge: MCCCCXLI. *adi.* XI. *Otubrio. Consciosia che l'arte, & mestier, delle carte, e figure stampide, che se fano in Venesia è vegnudo a total deffaction, e questo sia per la gran quantità de carte da zugar, e fegure depente stampide, le qual vien fate de fuora de Venezia, ala qual cosa è da meter remedio, che i diti maestri, i quali sono assaii in fameja, habiano più presto utilitade, che i forestieri. Sia ordenado, e statuido, come anchora i diti maestri ne ha supplicado, che da mo in avanti non possa vegnir over esser condutto in questa Terra alcun lavorerio dela predicta arte, che sia stampido, o depento in tella, o in carta, come sono anchone e carte da zugare, e cadaun altro lavorerio dela so arte facto a penello, e stampido, soto pena di perdere i lavori condutti, e liv. xxx. e sol. xii. pag.* 6. *dela qual pena pecuniaria un terzo sia del Comun, un terzo di signori justitieri vechi, ai quali questo sia comesso, e un terzo sia del accusador. Cum questa tamen condition, che i maestri, i quali fanno de i predetti lavori in questa Terra, non possano vender i predetti suo lavori fuor delle sue botege sotto la pena preditta, salvo che de merchore a S. Polo, e da sabado a S. Marco sotto la penna predetta.*

Nel millesimo, e zorno soprascritto fo confermado lordene soprascritto per i spectabili, et generosi homini mis. Nicolò Bondimero, mis. Jeronimo Querini, e mis. Andrea Barbarigo honorandi provedadori de Comun.

Et per i spectabili signori justixieri vechi mis. Jeronimo Contarini, e mis. Nadal Malipiero, el terze absente, mandando, e comandando, che de cetero la sia observada in tutto, e per tutto."

† " Lettere Pittoriche." tom. v. p. 321. *Lanzi* " Storia Pittorica" tom. i. p. 75.—Bassano. 1795-6. *Zani* " Materiali," &c. p. 76.

Temanza, indeed, possessed "certain fragments of wood prints, "rudely engraved, and representing different parts of Venice in its "ancient state;" which, from his knowledge of the various local alterations that had taken place in the city since that period, could not, he judged,* be of a later date than the commencement of the century.

Lanzi ascribes to the same epoch, "certain ancient playing "cards, which the Count Giacomo Durazzo, formerly the Im- "perial Ambassador at Venice, possessed in his very rich cabinet "of prints, now passed into the collection† of his nephew, the "Marquis Girolamo. They are," says Lanzi, "of a much larger "size than those used at present, and very thick, like the cotton "paper found in ancient manuscripts. The figures are represented "upon a gold ground, and are three kings, two queens, and two "pages (*fanti*), one of them on horseback: each card is marked "*bastone, spada or denajo.*‡ The style of design a good deal re- "sembles that of Jacobello del Fiore; the work has been deemed "printed by the best judges; the colours appear to have been laid "on with a stensil. § I am unacquainted," adds Lanzi, "with a "more ancient monument of the kind."

The edict in question is, I think, ample proof that wood engraving was known in Venice, at least, as early as 1400. But this

* Lett. Pitt. tom. v. p. 322.

† This magnificent collection of ancient prints, is, I believe, still in the possession of the same family at Genoa. I shall have future occasion to notice the rarities it contains.

‡ *Sono tre Regi; e in oltre due donne, due fanti, uno a cavallo; e ha ciascuno o bastone, o spada, o denajo.*" "Storia Pittorica," tom. i. p. 76.

§ A thin plate of tin, or other metal, cut into holes of various shapes and dimensions, as required; by means of which the ancient colourers of cards were enabled to colour any particular part of their cards, with a large brush, without soiling the remainder. Each figure, of course, required as many stensils as colours. This simple machine was formerly much used in the manufacture of paper-hangings for rooms. That it was anciently resorted to in colouring wood engravings, generally, is I think less certain. The expense and trouble required in preparing the necessary stensils, it is probable, prevented that mode of colouring from being adopted, except when great numbers of the same print were required to be tinted; as was the case with cards.

is not all. It speaks of the art of making cards, and printed figures, in terms which would have been every way appropriate, had the edict had for its object the re-establishment of the oldest manufacture of Venice; and, when coupled with other circumstances, especially the account of the two Cunio, furnishes a strong ground for the conjecture, that engraving in wood had, from a very early period, been practised by the Venetians, who may easily be supposed to have learnt it in the course of their commerce with the Chinese, and that through their means it became at length promulgated in various parts of Europe. *

* PALMER, *in his History of Printing*, p. 5, suggests other means by which we may have got this art from the Chinese. Speaking of Block-Printing, he says; "it is even "demonstrable, from authentick testimonies, "to have been practised in *China* and *Japan* "above four centuries before it was known "in Europe: it is not easy, I grant, to prove "that we received it from them, because of "their vast distance, and the little commerce "between us, before the year 1440: yet there "is no impossibility, but that it might have "been brought us by some merchant, either "by the way of *Muscovy* or the *Red Sea*, the "*Persian Gulph*, or *Arabia*, of which opi-"nion," adds he, "I could mention many "authors."

Various modes, indeed, may be pointed out by which this art might have got to us from China or Tartary. We might have received it from the Arabs, who, at a very remote period, are known to have had intercourse with the Chinese. Indeed, *the travels of two Arabs, who visited that country as early as the ninth century*, are in print, translated into the French language by the learned *Eusebe Renaudot* (Paris, 1718. 8vo). It is true the writer says nothing of engraving in wood; but he informs us, p. 23, "*that all* "*the Chinese, rich and poor, learned to read* "*and to write*," which is some evidence that *printing* must then have been common in China; for the expense of *manuscripts* must, at all times and in all places, have been beyond the means of the poorer classes of the community; and men seldom learn an art which they can have little opportunity of practising.

But now that I have mentioned this ancient narrative, I cannot refrain citing from it the account of a custom, which the writer informs us then prevailed in India or in China, (for he seems to have spoken of those countries without sufficient distinction): not that it has any reference to the art of engraving; but because, as far as it goes, it is evidence of a *very early*, though perhaps unobserved, intercourse between the inhabitants of the most remote parts of Asia, and those of Europe; or else of some more ancient connexion between the barbarous nations, who deluged Europe during the early centuries of the Christian æra, and the southern parts of Asia.

"Dans les Indes," says the Arabian writer, (p. 37, 38) "lors qu'un homme accuse un

Let us briefly examine the arguments by which such an hypothesis may be supported; taking as the basis of the discussion, first, the known antiquity of this art in China; and, secondly, the total silence of old historians as to its invention in Europe.

" autre de quelque crime qui mérite la mort,
" c'est la coustume de demander à l'accusé
" s'il soustiendra bien l'espreuve du feu.
" S'il respond qu'oüy, alors *on fait chauffer*
" *un morceau de fer, jusqu'à ce qu'il soit*
" *tout rouge.* On luy dit ensuite d'estendre
" sa main, et on met dessus sept feuilles d'un
" certain arbre qu'ils ont dans les Indes, et
" le fer rouge par dessus les feuilles. Il
" *marche ensuite de costé et d'autre pendant*
" *quelque temps,* et après cela il jette le fer.
" *Aussi-tost on luy met la main dans une*
" *poche de cuir, qui est en même temps ca-*
" *chetée avec le sceau du Prince: au bout*
" *de trois jours,* s'il vient pour comparoistre,
" en disant *qu'il n'a souffert aucune brulure,*
" on luy ordonne de tirer sa main: *s'il n'y*
" *paroist aucune impression du feu, il est*
" *déclaré innocent,* et délivré du supplice
" dont il estoit menacé. L'accusateur est
" condamné à payer un *man* d'or d'amende
" envers le Prince. Quelquefois ils font
" boüillir de l'eau dans une chaudière jusqu'à
" ce qu'elle soit si chaude que personne
" n'en puisse approcher. Ils *jettent alors*
" *dans la chaudière un anneau de fer, et*
" *commandent à celuy qui est accusé de*
" *mettre sa main dedans, et de retirer l'an-*
" *neau.* J'en ay vû," says the Arabian writer,
" un qui y mit sa main de cette manière, et
" qui la retira saine et entiere. L'accusateur
" est de mesme condamné à payer un *man*
" d'or."

The same custom prevailed in Italy, and, perhaps, in other parts of Europe, about the same time, or soon after, *Bettinelli* (Risorgimento d'Italia, tom. ii. p. 369), after mentioning other superstitious methods, by which the innocence or guilt of an accused person was established during the low ages in Italy, relates as follows: " The trial by fire obliged
" the accused person to carry in his hands, for
" the distance of nine or twelve paces, a plate
" of iron, of the weight of three pounds,
" heated till it was red hot; or, else, he was
" to thrust his hand into an iron glove, heated
" in the same manner; or into a cauldron of
" boiling water, from the bottom of which
" he was to take a ring. Immediately upon
" his hand being taken out of the iron glove,
" or from the cauldron, it was wrapped in a
" cloth, which was sealed with the seal of
" the judge, and that of the accuser; and, at
" the expiration of three days, the hand was
" uncovered, in a public and formal manner,
" by breaking the seals; when, if it was found
" to have sustained no visible injury, the ac-
" cused person was declared innocent." These, and other similar practices, says *Bettinelli*, are of German origin. The testimony of the Arabian writer, however, and it is undoubted authority, since he was an eye-witness, proves them to be Asiatic. The two accounts resemble each other in so many minute particulars, that it seems impossible the coincidence should have been the effect of chance.

The ancient use of wood engraving amongst the people of China, Japan, and some other parts of the east, is not denied by those writers who, nevertheless, are unwilling to admit that we are indebted to them for the discovery: the little intercourse, say they, which took place between us previous to the fifteenth century, and the vast distance of those countries, oppose the supposition that we got it from them; and, moreover, the earliest European travellers take no notice of Chinese printing.

To the first of these objections it may be answered; that however it is applicable to Europe in general, it is by no means applicable to Venice.

The Venetians, even as early as the sixth century,* had rendered themselves a naval and commercial power of some consideration. The situation of their city, and the growing strength of their fleets, secured them from the calamities to which their neighbours were so often exposed; and, little affected by the troubles and revolutions of Italy, during succeeding centuries of anarchy and barbarism, they silently pursued their course, solely intent on riches and aggrandizement. It appeared, to use the expression of an Italian writer, as if they had not determined to what nation they should belong; but, meanwhile, they lent themselves to that which they thought could best serve them, and would be most productive of profit. †

The centre of their commercial operations was Constantinople, where, even prior to the ninth century, they had the good fortune to make themselves serviceable to the Greek Emperours, and were well received. So intimate, indeed, was the communication between the Greeks and the Venetians, that we learn, from the most ancient chronicles, that the Greek language was commonly spoken in Venice; the dresses of the people, as well as their customs, were for

* *Busching.* "La Italia Geografico-storico-politica," Venezia. 1780. 8vo. tom ii. p. 89.

† *Bettinelli.* "Risorgimento d'Italia," tom. ii. p. 279.

the most part Greek; and even their most magnificent buildings were, in a great measure, the works of Greek artists.

In process of time, their credit became so firmly established at Constantinople, that in 1189, a district of that city was given to them by the Emperour.

After the tenth century, they acquired possessions and territory in Tyre, at Jerusalem, and elsewhere; insomuch, that, soon after 1200, the government gave directions to Marsilio Giorgio, that he should compose a full and particular account of the places under its dominion; which work, if we except, perhaps, some books of travels, may be termed the earliest specimen of Venetian literature. *

The east thus became to the Venetians an inexhaustible source of wealth; for, by their skill and industry, they succeeded in extending their commercial relations, even to the extreme parts of Asia. They received into their magazines at Alexandria and Cairo, by sea, the productions of Arabia, Persia, and the most remote parts of India; and, thence, bringing them to Venice, distributed them to all parts of Europe, as well by sea as by land carriage.

They succeeded, likewise, in establishing a direct traffic with Persia, Tartary, China, and Japan; sending, for that purpose, several of their most respectable citizens, and largely providing them with every requisite.† About 1250, though some accounts say earlier, Niccolo and Maffeo (or Matteo) Polo, left Venice and proceeded to Constantinople; whence, crossing the Black Sea, they visited Persia, Tartary, and China. They staid several years at the court of Kublay, the Great Chan of Tartary, whose flattering and cordial reception of the Venetian travellers is, I think, sufficient evidence of some previous intercourse between the two countries. About 1269 they returned to Venice; and in 1271, or the beginning of 1272, they set out upon a second visit to Tartary and China, taking with them Marco Polo, the son of Niccolo and the nephew of Maffeo: upon

* *Bettinelli*, tom. ii. p. 281.

† *Bettinelli*, tom ii. 282.

this occasion, they are said to have been entertained seventeen years at the court of the Chan of Tartary. Marco, as is well known, wrote the account of his travels, some time after the return of the three citizens to Venice, which took place in 1295. *

The early and intimate intercourse between Venice and the nations of the east, is, therefore, abundantly proved; and this is all that was wanted, to shew that the supposition of the Venetians having acquired the art of engraving in wood through their means, is not unreasonable.

But Marco Polo, it may be said, did not notice this art in the account which he left us of the marvels he had witnessed in China. The answer to this objection is obvious; it was no marvel; it had no novelty to recommend it; it was practised in 1285, as we have seen, at Ravenna; and had, perhaps, been practised a century earlier in Venice. His mention of it, therefore, was not called for, and he preferred instructing his countrymen in matters with which they were not hitherto acquainted; and relating wonders which, until corroborated by other testimony, were not believed. †

It is however necessary that I should give some further reasons for the opinion above declared. Since the showing that we might have got the art of wood engraving from the east, does not prove that we did. And as for the silence of old writers respecting its being invented in Europe, the same argument may be insisted upon, with equal force, to shew that we did not derive it from the east; since no one has recorded it. I shall, therefore, with as much brevity as the question will admit of, defend my hypothesis upon the simple ground of probability.

* *Tiraboschi.* "Storia della Letteratura Italiana." *Modena,* 1788. 4to. tom. iv. p. 91, et seq.

† His book, for a long time, was considered as little better than a collection of fables of his own invention; later travellers, however, confirmed the truth of some of his accounts: but that which, most of all, established his character for veracity, was the publication of "*The Travels of the two Arabs*" in the ninth century, mentioned in a preceding note.—*Tiraboschi.* tom. iv. p. 103.

An ORIGINAL and GREAT INVENTION, and that of which we treat well merits that name, is amongst the rarest of human occurrences. We combine, we modify, we improve; we correct that which was before defective; and thus, by slow degrees, arts and sciences are brought to perfection. But of original and great inventions, it will not, I think, be going too far to say, that one of them is more than falls to the average proportion of an age.

Such fruits of the human intellect, and especially those which relate to the sciences, or the fine arts, cannot be looked for, except from man in a state of civilization, peace, and comparative happiness; and were consequently very unlikely to be produced in Europe during those rude centuries in which the means of plunder and aggression on the one hand, and the arts of self-preservation on the other, constituted the chief occupation of men's thoughts, and were the main spring of their actions,

It is indeed true, that in the XIIIth century Niccola Pisano, and Giovanni Cimabue, the first a sculptor, the second a painter, made the first steps towards the re-establishment and improvement of their respective arts: but they were not the *inventors* of those arts, which, however degraded, had never entirely ceased to be practised, even in the most barbarous times, by Greek as well as by European artists. Still the times in which Pisano and Cimabue lived, although the dawnings of civilization had begun to appear in Italy, were those of comparative darkness and ignorance.

The encreasing pomp of the Roman church, fostered as it was by the enthusiasm of all classes of the people; the rivalry of the different Italian cities, which vied with each other in testifying their devotion to their patron saints, by works of superstitious magnificence, (and never was this religious rivalry more general throughout Italy, than in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries*) were causes which could scarcely fail to operate powerfully towards effecting

* Witness the *Duomo of Orvieto*, the *Campo Santo of Pisa*, *the Church* of *S. Francesco* at *Assisi*, and the façade of the *Duomo* of *Sienna;* all of them striking exam-

the restoration of the fine arts: and yet, so forcibly were they counteracted by the general distaste for literature and science, which still prevailed, added, perhaps, to the disquietude of those times, that had it not been for Giotto, (who may truly be said to have been gifted by nature with a genius of most rare occurrence, and who struck out a new path) painting would probably have continued, for nearly two centuries, without experiencing any sensible improvement; a supposition which we are the better justified in forming, as, from his time to the time of Masaccio, a period of considerably more than a hundred years, little change in the art of painting, that can be called improvement, did take place.

The thirteenth, or even the fourteenth century, therefore, was not likely to have been productive of an *invention* like that we treat of, even in Italy, where letters and science, nevertheless, revived sooner than in other parts of Europe.

Some writers, however, have insisted that the *principle* of this art, *impression*, was well known to the ancients; and that this is evident from their stamps of iron and other metals, still preserved in our museums, with which, as it is supposed, they marked their names or other inscriptions on their bales of goods, and on various articles of their manufacture; and, moreover, that this practice of applying stamps continued to be used throughout Italy, and in other parts of Europe, during the low ages.

The art of taking impressions from engraved blocks of wood, according to these writers, is little else than a modified application of a principle of universal notoriety from time immemorial, and consequently, scarce merits the name of an invention. Nay, Typography itself, it should seem, is no new invention: the idea of it, say they, was familiar to Cicero; and it is also known that the ancient artists, in stamping their inscriptions upon their lamps of

ples of the religious zeal and costly magnificence of those centuries, and decorated with numerous works of early Italian painting and sculpture; to say nothing of a very large proportion of the principal churches in other parts of Italy.

Terra-Cotta, used each letter separately, as our bookbinders do in lettering their volumes: the idea of moveable characters, therefore, say they, was no novelty.*

The stamps and signets of the ancients, their lamps, their vases, and their bassi-relievi of clay, which first being cast, or pressed into form, by means of molds, were afterwards finished by the tools of the modeller—and often, in parts, marked with letters, or ornaments, by the simple operation of stamping—sufficiently prove, I acknowledge, that they were no strangers to the art of impression. It also appears that they had stamps of separate letters.

But it is to be observed that the mode of impression here spoken of, in which the effect is produced by the simple operation of pressing one body against another body of softer texture, and thereby occasioning a change of form in its surface, is very distinct from that which is the subject of our inquiry: for the effect which is produced in the impressions taken from engravings on wood, is not that of *a change of form* in the surface of the paper on which

* "On sait que les Grecs et les Romains "avoient des bagues qui leur servoient non-"seulement de cachets, mais qu'ils appo-"soient aussi sur différens objets. Ils con-"noissoient même les lettres mobiles, ainsi "qu'on en a des preuves sur les lampes de "terre cuite, telles que M. de Murr (*Journal "zur Kunstgeschichte*, tom. ii. p. 182) dit "en avoir vû à Venise et au Cabinet de "Portici, et dont ils se servoient à peu près "de la même manière que le font aujour-"d'hui nos relieurs pour les étiquettes sur les "dos des livres.

"M. de Murr pense même que les Ro-"mains avoient des planches xylographiques; "et, suivant M. Fischer (*Beschreibung typo-"graphischen Seltenheiten Erste Lieferung*. "p. 33) Cicéron s'étoit déjà formé une "idée d'imprimer avec des types mobiles." JANSEN, *Essai sur l'Origine de la Gravure*. tom. i. p. 75, et tom. ii. pp. 34, 35.

Cicero, in refutation of the opinion, that the universe was the effect of the accidental union of numberless atoms (*De Natura Deorum, lib.* II. *cap.* 37) thus expresses himself: *Cur non idem putet, si innumerabiles unius et viginti formæ litterarum, vel aureæ, vel qualeslibet, aliquò conjiciantur, posse ex his in terram excussis annales Ennii, deinceps legi possint effici.* St. Jerome, also, recommends the practice of teaching children to read and spell, by means of separate letters cut in hard wood, or ivory. See *Lambinet* "Origine de l'Imprimerie." tom. i. pp. 45 et seq. (8vo. Paris, 1810).

such impressions are taken, but *a change of colour;* the parts impressed on the white paper being rendered apparent, not by any indentation of the paper in those parts, but by the black tint with which the projecting surface of the block was charged previous to the operation of printing it; which tint, by that operation, was transferred to the paper.

Unless, therefore, some evidence be brought to prove that the ancients used their stamps, not only to impress wax, clay, and other soft bodies, but, also, that they applied them charged with ink, or some other tint, for the purpose of stamping paper, parchment, or other substances, little, or not at all, capable of indentation—(and we are hitherto without such evidence), we shall still have reason to believe that they were wholly unacquainted with the art of which we treat. *

* Abundant evidence, in support of this opinion, might easily be brought forward. *Lambinet*, before cited (tom. i. pp. 51, 52) describes an ancient stamp in *intaglio*, which was evidently intended to be used upon wet clay, and is an interesting illustration of the observations offered in the text.

"En 1808," says he, "dans une fouille près de *Nasium*, ancienne forteresse des Gaules, chez les *Leuci*, aujourd'hui Nais, village situé sur la rivière d'Ornain, département de la Meuse, on trouva *deux petites pierres* en forme de tablettes, *chargées d'inscriptions sur leur tranche seulement*, et non sur leur surface. Les caractères ne pouvoient être lus, parce qu'ils étoient *gravés en sens inverse*. M. Barthélemi, propriétaire, envoya ces pierres à l'Académie Celtique de Paris. M. Dulaure, chargé de les examiner, a jugé que les tablettes où ces caractères étoient empreints durent être dans l'origine des espèces de *sigilla* ou *formes matrices* qu'on appliquoit sur une matière molle ou mise en fusion. Il a vû qu'ils servoient à imprimer sur un vase contenant des médicamens composés; la vertu de ces médicamens et le nom du médecin qui les avoit prescrits ou du pharmacien qui étoit chargé de les vendre. Voici la première inscription de ce genre:

Q. Jun. Tauri Anody
Num. ad omn. Lipp.

Le savant Dulaure lit: *Quinti Junii Tauridii anodinum ad omnes lyppas.* Remède anodin de Quintus Junius Tauridius pour tous les maux d'yeux . . . . *Mémoires de l'Académie Celtique* de Paris, 1808, Nos. 9 et 10, avec planches."

Jansen, "De l'Invention de l'Imprimerie," Paris, 1809, 8vo. p. 190, observes: "On sait que les Romains avoient coutume de marquer leurs vases. On trouve une infinité de ces vases de terre chargés d'inscriptions, sur lesquels on peut voir les recueils d'antiquités de M. le Comte de Caylus. *Vasa signare* veut naturellement dire *cacheter des vases, des bouteilles*, et c'est ce qui se prati-

Such a conclusion is less derogatory to the genius and talent of the ancients, than it would be for us to suppose that they had discovered the rudiments of this art, but were unequal, during so many centuries, to the task of bringing it to perfection; for as to the idea, which some writers have suggested, that the ancients were aware of the advantages which might be derived from the art of printing, and yet did not choose to practise it, I must own it has no place in my belief.

The transition, therefore, from the use of these stamps, in whatsoever manner they were applied, to the art which we term PRINTING, or taking impressions from letters or engravings, by means of black or any other tint, on paper, was not an obvious transition. The world appears to have existed more than two thousand years without its having occurred to any one to make it; and it seems very improbable, that it should have fallen to the lot of the unenlightened and degraded inhabitants of Europe, during the anarchy of the twelfth or thirteenth century, to be the means of effecting that, to which the united talents of the sages of Greece, Egypt, and Rome, had been incompetent.

Lanzi justly observes, that the stamps of the ancients, and the impressions from seals of metal, found on deeds and conveyances of the low ages, prove nothing more, than that mankind walked for many succeeding centuries upon the borders of the two great inventions of Typography and Chalcography, without having the luck to discover either of them; and appear neither to have had any influence upon the origin of those arts, nor to merit any place in their History. *

Upon the whole, the most reasonable conclusion appears to be that the Venetians acquired the art of wood engraving at a very early period of their intercourse with the people of Tartary, Thibet, and China; that they practised it, amongst the other arts which

quoit. On mettoit le nom du consul sur le bouchon de la bouteille, pour faire voir de quelle année étoit le vin qu'on y conservoit, &c."

* *Storia Pittorica*, tom. i. p. 92.

they had learned from their Eastern * friends, as a means of beneficial traffic with the continent of Europe; and that, in the course of time, the artists of Germany, and other parts, found out their secret and practised it themselves. But to return to the edict of which we were speaking.

It is to be observed, that the government of Venice did not deem it necessary to provide against the importation of printed figures and cards of foreign manufacture until 1441; which is, I think, some evidence that, in the beginning of that century, they were not manufactured in such large quantities, or of so good a quality, in other parts of Europe, as they were afterwards. For the Venetian merchants of that period, whose commercial relations extended to every part of civilized Europe, would not have failed to import such articles of devotion, luxury, or amusement, long before, had not the demand for them been fully supplied by their own artists, at as cheap a rate as they could be imported from foreign parts.

It is therefore probable, that, although the art of engraving in wood had been practised in many parts of Europe, as well as in Venice, prior to 1400, the Venetian engravers continued to be more numerous, and, perhaps, more skilful, than those of other countries, until some time after that period; but that, at length, wood

* *Busching*, before cited, (tom. ii. p. 15,) enumerates several sorts of manufacture which it is probable the Venetians learned in their intercourse with the East, and which, he says, they exclusively possess; especially a particular mode of making looking-glasses and glass beads. *Temanza* (Lett. Pitt. tom. v. p. 327) mentions a complaint preferred by the Venetian looking-glass makers against the painters, previous to 1436, for endeavouring to prevent them from ornamenting their looking-glasses with painting, without having recourse to them; which the company of painters seem to have considered an infringement of their privileges. Upon this occasion a reference is made to another document, apparently respecting them, as well as the painters, of the year 1345.—The showy productions of ancient Venetian manufacture are even now proverbial throughout Italy, under the appellation of " le galanterie di Venezia."

Mr. Douce possesses, in his highly valuable and interesting collection, a curious chart of Venetian workmanship of about 1400: it is neatly drawn with a pen, and folded in a manner very similar to many of the oriental manuscripts. The style of the cover in which it is enclosed, and, indeed, its whole appearance, is truly Asiatic.

engraving became improved by the artists of other parts; and that these, after the use of playing cards was become general, so increased in number and dexterity, as to be able to furnish their cards and printed figures at a lower price, and of a better quality, than the Venetian artists themselves could do; thus menacing entirely to supersede the use of the productions of an ancient Venetian manufacture, even in the city of Venice itself. Under these circumstances the government prudently stept forward for the protection of its own citizens with the above decree; which, as Zani observes, was intended to favor those artists who resided within the city of Venice exclusively, by prohibiting the importation of such kind of works, not only from distant parts of Europe, but even from places under the dominion of the Venetian republic.*

We learn from this document, that the artists who engraved in wood were incorporated with the painters of Venice, making part of the same company, as the barbers anciently did, with the surgeons, in this country.

This sort of union was common with the artists of those early times throughout Italy. The professors of painting, indeed, held the first rank, but all those who practised any art or handicraft at all connected with it, were included in the same corporate body. Thus the company of S. Luke at Venice comprised the engravers in wood, who manufactured cards and printed figures, and painters of the lowest order; besides the makers of trunks, chests, and various other articles of furniture, which it was customary, in those times, to decorate with carved-work and painting; also the carvers and gilders, who prepared the gold grounds upon which paintings were executed, and the ponderous decorations that surrounded them; all which things were finished before the painter commenced his labours, as the picture and its frame were never separated. The

* *Zani*, "Materiali, &c." p. 77. *Zani* makes this remark in reference to a passage in *Heineken, (Idée Générale*, p. 245) who, after noticing the decree in question, observes, as a matter of course, that all these foreign manufacturers of cards were Germans: "*qui sans doute*," says he, "*étoient des Allemands*."

painters' company at Bologna comprised even the saddlers, and those who made the sheaths of swords and daggers; because such things were often ornamented with painting and gilding: that of Florence comprised all those artists who worked in metal or on wood, and to whose arts the knowledge of design was in a greater or less degree necessary.*

The silence of old writers, as to the art of engraving in wood, has already been noticed, and I have endeavoured to account for it. In addition to the arguments which I then used, I must observe that it is probable that, for a very long time, *the nature of this art remained a secret, known to few, except those who practised it; and that it was commonly confounded with painting or drawing.* The representations of saints, and other devotional subjects, which the first wood engravers produced, were rudely engraved and printed in outline; and then daubed over with a few gay colours, in the manner so long afterwards continued in Germany and the low countries; so as to catch the eye of the vulgar, who no doubt considered them as pictures, and, like the vulgar of our own times, so denominated them. Being manufactured with little labour, they were sold at a cheap rate, and perhaps sometimes distributed gratis to the common people, who hung them up in their private oratories, or in other parts of their dwellings. Hence it is reasonable to suppose, that they were little esteemed by the richer classes of the community, who considered them as *paintings of an inferior kind,* and themselves employed artists of eminence to execute more finished pictures of such devotional subjects as they required, on vellum, or

* LANZI, *Storia Pittorica,* tom. i. pp. 30, 31. The company of painters at Venice, he says, was established previous to 1290. Unfortunately the original books of this ancient company were destroyed a little before 1436, and new ones written in their stead; in which, however, such of the ancient laws and regulations as were then deemed profitable were inserted. Hence many interesting records which, although they might have been imperfect as laws, would, no doubt, have thrown further light upon the arts of the early Venetians—and, amongst the rest, perhaps, upon their wood engraving—are irrecoverably lost.

See a second letter written by *Temanza* to *Count Algarotti,* inserted p. 323 of the fifth vol. of the "*Lettere Pittoriche.*"

on board. It is, therefore, not extraordinary that the ancient use of wood engraving should have escaped the notice of contemporaneous historians, since many of them were, perhaps, unconscious even of the existence of such an art; and those who were acquainted with it, considered it as an art of small importance.

Similar observations apply to playing cards. These were, no doubt, at first designed and finished by the hand; but soon became manufactured in large quantities by the engravers in wood. Nevertheless, persons of elevated rank still continued to employ artists of superior ability to paint them with the greatest delicacy in miniature; and it is related that Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, when a young man, paid no less than fifteen hundred crowns of gold for a pack of cards. * It is probable that the old Venetian cards described by Lanzi, which, although printed, had the ground behind the figures gilded, were intended for the use of the higher classes of the community.

Heineken,† and some other writers, have ascribed the invention of engraving in wood to the manufacturers of cards; but they have been unable to produce any evidence in support of such an opinion.

* *Filippo Maria Visconti* was born 1392, and died 1447. It is therefore probable, as *Zani* observes, (Materiali, &c. p. 186) that these cards were purchased prior to 1412. It will be seen from the original passage in which the circumstance is recorded by *Decembrio* in his life of the said *Visconti*, (*Mediolani apud Melchioris Malatestæ*, 1630, cap. lxi. p. 33) that these cards were very different from such as are now used.

"Variis etiam ludendi modis ab adoles-
"centia usus est; nam modo pila se exer-
"cebat, nunc folliculo: *pleruuque eo ludi*
"*genere, qui ex imaginibus depictis fit* in
"quo præcipue oblectatus est adeo ut inte-
"grum eorum ludum mille et quingentis
"aureis emerit auctore vel in primis *Marti-*
"*ano Derthonensi* ejus Secretario, qui De-
"orum imagines, subjectasque his animalium
"figuras, et avium miro ingenio, summaque
"industria perfecit," &c.

Cards, indeed, appear to have been executed in various manners for people of high distinction, and of various materials. *Jansen* (tom. i. p. 86, "Essai sur l'Origine de la Gravure") tells us, that *Breitkopf* describes a pack of piquet cards, in which the figures were engraved and gilt on plates of silver. Judging from their style of design, he was of opinion that they were the work of some artist of the Low Countries in the sixteenth century.

† Idée Générale, p. 237, et seq.

The argument of these writers is briefly as follows: the use of playing cards having become general, say they, the artists, whose occupation it was to make them, finding the great length of time which was required to design them with the hand, began to think that much labour would be saved were they to engrave their outlines upon blocks of wood, and print them; and that, therefore, they invented the art in question. This mode of reasoning seems founded upon the agreeable supposition, that the means of accomplishing any desired purpose are always to be ready at the call; and could be applied, with equal force, in support of the opinion, that wood engraving had been invented two centuries earlier, for the purpose of satisfying the popular demand for the images of saints.

The truth is, that we have no evidence whatever of wood engraving having been invented in Europe, but, on the contrary, many reasons to suppose that we got it from the East; amongst which may be named the mode of printing used by our early engravers on wood, and the custom, still, I understand, preserved in Germany, of gluing the design itself, which it is intended to engrave, upon the wooden block: both of them methods which exactly resemble those practised, from time immemorial, by the Chinese.

I am of opinion with Breitkopf, that wood prints of saints,* and other devotional subjects, preceded the use of wood engraving in the manufacture of playing cards; and, indeed, if wood engraving was practised, as I have endeavoured to shew, prior to 1285, such must have been the case; since we have no good authority for supposing that cards came into any thing like general use until considerably after that period.

That, upon the use of playing cards becoming prevalent, the artists who were accustomed to engrave the figures of saints, and other devotional subjects, were not tardy in applying the art they had so long practised, to the purpose of manufacturing those articles of amusement, may well be believed. Nor could the additional

* So I learn from *Jansen*, "Essai sur l'Origine de la Gravure," tom. i. p. 104.

encouragement, which the great demand for playing cards occasioned, fail to stimulate the exertions and increase the numbers of the professors of engraving in wood. The use of cards, therefore, although it does not appear to have given rise to the invention of that art, powerfully operated towards its further promulgation; and is, on that account, in a considerable degree connected with its early history.

In one point of view, indeed, the ANTIQUITY OF CARDS becomes a feature of great importance in our inquiry; because, whatever documents can be produced which prove their general use in any European country at any early period, may, without an unreasonable stretch of hypothesis, be brought in evidence, that the art of WOOD ENGRAVING was known in that country at that time. For, before wood engraving was resorted to in the manufacture of cards, they must have been designed and painted by the hand; and the labour required in preparing entire packs of cards in that manner, must have made them far too expensive an amusement to be indulged in by any but the more opulent classes of society, and, consequently, must have acted as a prohibition against their *general* use.

The EARLY HISTORY OF PLAYING CARDS themselves is, however, involved in great obscurity; and I am the less disposed to enter upon the difficulties of its discussion, as a gentleman,* much better fitted for the task than I am, has been some time employed upon a work relative to that curious subject, which, when completed, will, I have no doubt, satisfy the inquiries of those who are lovers of research, as far as the materials and evidence, now existing, can furnish the means. Referring the reader, therefore, to that work for fuller information, I shall content myself with a slight review of the question.

Anstis, in his History of the Order of the Garter, produces a passage, cited from a wardrobe *computus*, made in the sixth year of

* *Mr. W. S. Singer*, to whose liberal kindness I am indebted for several interesting communications upon the subject, and of whose name future mention will be made.

our King Edward the First, (A. D. 1277) in which mention is made of a game entitled "The Four Kings." The words are "Waltero Sturton, ad Opus Regis, *ad ludendum ad quatuor reges,* viiis. vd." and hence that writer conjectures that playing cards were then used in England; a supposition which might seem the less unreasonable since we have no account of any game played in Europe, in which Four Kings were used, except in cards.* Still it is possible that this game might have been the oriental game of chess, which was sometimes played with four kings.

* Mr. Strutt, who has given this passage, in p. 285 of his Sports and Pastimes (2d edit.) proceeds to observe, that, in the opinion of those learned in Asiatic history, cards were used in eastern parts of the world long before they were known in Europe; and hence he considers it not improbable, that Edward the First, who, before his accession to the throne, had resided nearly five years in Syria, might have learned *the game of 'The Four Kings'* in that country, and introduced it at court upon his return to England. He admits, however, that the total silence of every kind of authority respecting card playing, from the above period until 1463, (an interval of more than one hundred and eighty years) when Edward the Fourth, upon the petition of the card makers of London, prohibited the importation of foreign cards, appears to constitute a powerful objection to such a conjecture.

Still Mr. Strutt justly observes, that the silence of ancient documents respecting card playing "is by no means a positive proof "that the game of '*The Four Kings*' was not "played with cards, nor that cards did not "continue to be used during the whole of the "above-mentioned interval in the higher cir-"cles, though not perhaps with *such abuses* "*as were afterwards practised,* and which "excited the reprehension of the moral and "religious writers. Besides," continues he, "at the time that cards were first introduced, "they were drawn and painted by the hand "without the assistance of a stamp or plate: "it follows of course that much time was re-"quired to complete a set or pack of cards: "the price they bore no doubt was adequate "to the labour bestowed upon them, which "necessarily must have enhanced their value "beyond the purchase of the under classes of "the people; and, for this reason," continues he, "it is, I presume, that card playing, "though it might have been known in Eng-"land, was not much practised until such "time as inferior sets of cards, proportion-"ally cheap, were produced for the use of "the commonalty; which seems to have been "the case when Edward the Fourth ascended "the throne," &c.

With respect to the objection which, according to the same writer, some have urged against the antiquity of playing-cards; viz. that in those early times there was no paper proper for their fabrication, I shall only observe that it appears to me to be ill-founded. Two sheets of the ancient cotton-paper pasted together, and rubbed over with size, would have constituted a body of sufficient strength and thickness for any purpose required in playing-cards.

The Abbe Longuerve declares, that the use of cards was prohibited to the clergy by a Council held at Cologne in 1281;* and Papillon informs us, that cards were forbidden by an edict of S. Louis, upon his return from the Holy Land in 1254.† Both these writers, it is now commonly believed, were mistaken in the sense in which they understood the prohibitory passages in these two edicts. Dice and other games of hazard, it is said, were referred to, but not cards.

The celebrated Tiraboschi, however, cites a manuscript of one Sandro di Pipozzo di Sandro,‡ entitled, "Trattato del Governo della Famiglia," composed in 1299, in which playing-cards are expressly mentioned; and Heineken informs us, that in a book entitled

* See *Zani*, p. 79, and note 73, p. 152. The words which *Longuerve* considered applicable to cards, were these: *Item (Clerici) "ad aleas et taxillos non ludant, nec hujus "modi ludis intersint."* (*Hartzheim*, "Concilia Germaniæ," vol. iii. p. 364.

† *Papillon*, tom. i. p. 80. The words in this edict of S. Louis of 1254, which *Papillon* understood as relating to cards, are: "*Praeterea prohibemus districte, ut nullus "homo ludat ad taxillos, sive aleis, aut "scaceis.*" *Heineken*, "Idée Générale," p. 239. *Zani*, p. 153.

‡ *Tiraboschi*—"Storia della Letteratura Italiana," tom. vi. p. 1194. Modena, 1788 al 1794. This manuscript was first referred to by the authors of the *Vocabolario della Crusca*, who, beside other mention of it, cite from it these words: *se giucherà di danari, o così, o alle* CARTE *gli apparecchierai la via*, &c. There are, however, it seems, two or three copies of it; and *Zani*, "Materiali, &c." p. 160, appears inclined to believe this passage relative to *cards* to be an interpolation of a copyist of the beginning of the fifteenth century; although I think without sufficient reason. The truth is, that Zani, in consequence of having, as he thought, detected the fallacy of *some* pretended documents in favor of the antiquity of cards, and finding the early Councils silent respecting them, became sceptical to *all*. He appears to have had no idea that card-playing could at any time have been considered as *an innocent amusement*; a reflection which, had it occurred to him, (and he himself cited a passage from Morelli's Chronicle which might have given him the hint) would in a great degree have obviated his objections. However, some of the documents which he discredited have since been confirmed; and others have been discovered which furnish reason for the belief that cards, of some kind or other, were in use, in various parts of Europe, even earlier than had heretofore been commonly supposed. Perhaps, ere this, he has found that the passage in *Sandro di Pipozzo* is genuine.

"Das gülden Spiel," (the Golden Game) printed by Gunther Zainer in 1472,* in folio, it is said, that playing cards were first *introduced*, or *came*, into Germany in the year 1300.

It may seem somewhat extraordinary, that in opposition to this document, which he himself brought forward, Heineken should have attempted to shew that cards were *invented* in Germany.† Mr. Singer argues from it, with more plausibility, that they found their way into Germany from Italy; where he is of opinion, with Breitkopf, that they were first used.

Charles V. king of France, who died in 1380, is said to have banished from his kingdom all games of hazard, and to have honored Jean de Saintre with his favor, because he abstained from playing at cards or dice;‡ and the archives of France contain an

* *Idée Générale*, p. 241. "Il est dit," says he, "Tit. V. que le jeu de cartes a commencé à *prendre cours* en Alemagne en 1300. *Nun ist das spil vol untrew, und als ich gelesen han, so ist es* KOMMEN *in tuetschland, der ersten in dem jar, da man zalt von crist geburt tausend dreihundert jar.*" The passage is also given by *Jansen*, who differs, however, from *Heineken* respecting the year in which the book was printed. He says it was printed by *Gunther Zainer at Augsburg* in 1478. He adds: "Mais il faut croire, dit M. DE MURR," (for *Jansen* has seldom any opinion of his own) "que cette époque est reculée de cinquante ans de trop; et, suivant *M. de Heineken*, il est impossible de déterminer au juste le temps de leur invention." *Jansen*, "Origine de la Gravure," tom. i. p. 88.

† "Idée Générale," p. 239. *Heineken* was however, afterwards, obliged to give up his hypothesis, and admit, that the Italian game, called *Trappola*, was, in all probability, as *Breitkopf* had conjectured, more ancient than his favourite German game of *Lansquenet*. Compare his *Idée Générale* (p. 238, &c.) with his Neue Nachrichten, pp. 136, 137, 138, and 139, in the last of which pages he is forced to confess, that "the passage in the Gülden Spiel of 1472, means no more than that playing-cards did not come into Germany before 1300; and that, therefore, it cannot be concluded that, at that early period, cards, printed on paper or pasteboard, existed in Germany; although," he says, "it is still probable that playing-cards, which were known in Italy in 1299, might have made their appearance in Germany as soon as 1300."

‡ See *Zani*, note 77, p. 155, and note 79, p. 162, who quotes *Bullet*, "Recherches Historiques sur les Cartes à jouer," à Lyon, 1757. *Bullet* cites the following passage from the Chronicle of this *Jean de Saintre*: "*Et vous qui êtes noyeux joueux de Cartes et de Dés, &c.*" The words are supposed to be spoken by the king to his attendants.

entry, in a book of accounts, of one Charbot Poupart, treasurer, about 1392, which is as follows:

" A Jacquemin Gringonneur Peintre pour trois jeux de Cartes a or, et a diverses couleurs, de plusieurs devises, pour porter devers le dit Seigneur (Charles VI.) pour son ebatement, LVI sols parisis." *

With respect to this last document, I must observe that I think it evident, from the moderate price paid for these three packs of cards, that they must have been first printed from engraved blocks of wood, and afterwards gilt and coloured by hand; although, no doubt, with more than an ordinary degree of care, as they were for the king's use. † It is also remarkable, if I rightly understand the expression: " de plusieurs devises," that these packs of cards were of three distinct sorts. ‡

Cards, however, were used in France considerably before this period, if we can rely on the authenticity of a manuscript of

* *Heineken*, " Idée Générale," p. 237. *Jansen*, " Essai sur l'Origine de la Gravure," tom. i. p. 85. *Zani*, note 77, p. 155.

† I am surprised that it should not have occurred to any of the numerous writers on this subject, that the price here mentioned must have been, even in the fourteenth century, wholly inadequate to the labour of drawing and colouring three packs of cards by the hand. The artists who coloured cards, or other wood prints, were probably styled *painters*, in France, as well as in Germany, where, as we shall presently find, they were termed *Briefmaler*. We have seen that they made part of the company of painters at Venice; and there is, I think, good reason to be of opinion that the term painter was anciently applied to denote any artist whose business it was to lay on colours, whether on paper, on board, on canvass, or on any other material, as it is indeed by the common people to this day.

Meerman, however, amongst others, cites the above document in proof of the opinion, that all the playing-cards of the fourteenth century were drawn, in the manner of the miniatures in ancient manuscripts, by the hand. This it was necessary for him to insist upon, before he could produce his hero, Lawrence Coster, as the inventor of wood engraving. See *Jansen*, " de l'Invention de l'Imprimerie," p. 191.

‡ Possibly they were of the kinds described by *Conrad Gesner* in the passage which will be cited in a note to a subsequent page of this chapter. *Zani* (Matériali, p. 181) suspects that they might have been composed of the figures of men, quadrupeds, and birds, like those made for *Filippo Maria Visconti*, mentioned in a preceding note.

M. Lancelot, entitled "Renart le Contrefait," which, at fol. 95, contains the following passage:

"Si comme fols et folles sont
Qui pour gaigner au bordel vont;
Jouent aux dez, aux CARTES, aux tables,
Qui à Dieu ne sont delectables."

"This romance," says Jansen, who cited it upon the authority of M. Van Praet, "is in verse, and was composed by an anonymous writer, who appears to have been a native of Champagne. He informs us, at fol. 83, of the period at which he wrote."

"Celui qui ce roman escript,
Et qui le fist sans faire faire,
Et sans prendre autre exemplaire,
Tant y pensa et jour et nuict,
En l'an mil iij cent xxviij.
En analant y mist sa cure
Et continua l'escripture.
Plus de xiij ans y mist au faire;
Aincoit qu'il le pense parfaire,
Bien poet veoir la manière."

"This passage fixes the entire completion of the romance in 1341. The author," adds Jansen, "records many facts anterior "to this date; he speaks of Philippe de Valois as still living."*

Contrasted with the testimony of the above romance, is a French manuscript in folio, of "the legendary life of Alexander the Great," preserved in the Bodleian Library. It is beautifully written on vellum, and most superbly decorated with miniature paintings. At the end of the MS. is this inscription:

* *Jansen*, "Essai sur l'Origine de la Gravure," tom. i. pp. 99, 100.

" *Romans du boin Roi Alixandre—qui fu perescript le* xviii *jour de* " *Decembre l'an* M.CCC.XXXVIII."

Then follows, in letters of gold:

" *Che livre fu perfais de la enluminure au* xviii *jour d'Avril per* " *Johan de Guse l'an de grace* M.CCC.XLIIII."

The text of this MS. is interspersed with highly wrought illuminations of a square form; independently of which the bottom margins of the pages are ornamented with the representations of a vast variety of games and sports, in small figures, arranged in the manner of friezes. These miniatures appear to have no connexion, whatever, with the matter contained in the text; and are purely decorative. The games of chess, and tables, (if I rightly remember) occur frequently; but I could find no representation of card-playing; and hence I conclude that cards could not have been in general use, at that time, in the place where this MS. was illuminated.*

Mr. Singer, however, has recently discovered a very curious document, relative to the early use of playing-cards, in an illumination in another French manuscript romance, supposed to be likewise of the fourteenth century; although, probably, some years later than the above. It is remarkable (and it goes a good way towards confirming Mr. Singer's hypothesis, that cards were first used in Italy) that the group represented appear to be playing with ITALIAN CARDS, a card, the face of which is visible, being marked with pieces of money, or *denari*.†

This valuable MS. was formerly in the possession of the Duke of Roxburgh, and is, I am informed, now preserved in the library at Lee Priory in Kent.

* *Mr. Strutt* has often availed himself of the miniatures in this MS. in his work of " Sports and Pastimes;" and, indeed, as I neglected, when at Oxford, to transcribe the inscriptions at the end of the volume, I have copied them from him.

† The public will, I believe, be gratified with an engraving of this curious miniature, in Mr. Singer's work.

It may be observed that the writer of the Romance of "Renart le Contrefait," classes card players with those who played at dice, and other games of hazard; and we have already seen cards reprobated by King Charles the Fifth: both of them circumstances which may seem ill to accord with the silence of the Councils of those early times respecting cards. For had card-playing been then in general use, and classed with games of hazard, destructive to good morals, it is contended by some writers that those Councils would not have failed to prohibit it in their synods, as they did other games much more innocent in their tendency, under severe penalties.

Upon such grounds, Zani, who has taken great pains to elucidate the subject, by reference to the early Councils,* is led to conclude that playing-cards are not so ancient as has been commonly supposed.

The people of Germany, he suspects, were amongst the last who were acquainted with their use. His suspicion "is founded upon "the following words of the Synodus Herbipolensis, anno Christi "1446 (Hartzheim, Concilia Germaniæ, tom. v. p. 333): Ludus "alearum, scaccorum, chorearum, taxillorum, annulorum, et glo- "borum Monachis, et Monialibus prohibemus districte. Now if in "this Synod," says he, "we find even the game of chess rigor- "ously prohibited, which is rather a game of talent than of for- "tune, we must reasonably conclude, that playing-cards, of which "it makes no mention, were not then known."†

The first German Council, indeed, in which Zani found playing-cards prohibited, is the Synodus Bambergensis, anno Christi 1491 (Hartzheim, tom. v. p. 597). The passage is as follows:—"Titulus "XVI. Usum tabernarum, præterquam in itinere constituti et ne "tabernas in domibus suis teneant, ludosque taxillorum et *char-* "*tarum*, et his similes in locis publicis, præsertim inter Laicos, "omnes et singuli Clerici in Prælaturis etiam, et in sacris Ordinibus "constituti, sibi hac sacræ nostræ Synodi prohibitione sub excom- "municationis pœna noverint esse interdictos, et prohibitos. In "the Synodus Caminensis, 1492 (p. 661)," continues Zani, "cards

* *Zani*, "Materiali, &c." p. 152, et seq. † Idem, p. 158, 159.

" are also prohibited; and in the Varmiensis Synodus, 1497, cap.
" xxxvii. (p. 664) are named: Mercantias, choreas, ludos taxil-
" lorum, scurrilia verba et turpia (Clerici) omnino vitent,—but
" nothing is said of cards."

The silence of the German councils respecting playing cards, 'till the year 1491, seems indeed remarkable; especially when contrasted with the manner in which we have seen them spoken of in France as early as the middle of the fourteenth century: to say nothing of the other documents cited by Heineken from Gunther Zainer's *Gülden Spiel,* and the *Chronicle at Ulm.*

In Italy, France, and Spain, cards do not appear to have escaped this censure so long; and hence it may seem reasonable to conclude that they began to be productive of pernicious effects sooner in those countries than in Germany.

Nevertheless, I am not inclined to dispute the antiquity of playing cards in Germany; especially as it seems doubtful how far the framers of the early Councils might have deemed a specific mention of them necessary to their prohibition. Upon this question I shall now offer a few remarks, with a view to reconcile such apparent contrariety of testimony; lest the alleged silence of those Councils, with regard to cards, should be too easily admitted as proof against their early use; and employed, as Zani has employed it, as a weapon by which to overthrow all other documents, however apparently genuine, that may be brought forward in favor of their antiquity.

The chief point to be decided is, whether or not the early Councils could have intended to prohibit playing-cards under the term ALEA. Heineken appears to have thought not; and Zani adopted the same opinion after considerable research: and yet it may, at least, admit of a doubt, whether the evidence brought forward by the last mentioned writer, in confirmation of that opinion, might not be used, with equal effect, in support of an opposite conclusion.

In considering the question, it is necessary, in the first place, to ascertain the proper acceptation of the word ALEA—so often found in the decrees of the Councils, and in the writings of old authors; and

it is evident that, in determining this point, we must keep in view, not the ancient derivation of the term, but simply the force and meaning attached to it in the times in which those documents were written.

Amongst the many works which Zani examined for this purpose, he mentions (Materiali, &c. p. 156) several interesting tracts inserted in Gronovius (Thesaurus Græcarum Antiquitatum, Lugduni Batavorum, 1697-99, vol. vii. col. 905, et seq.) "from amongst which," says he, "I shall select that of Bulengerio, that of Souterio, and "another of Senftlebio. The first tell us (cap. lviii. col. 924) that "ALEA proprie dicitur de talis, tesseris, calculis, et omnibus fortuitis, "quæ vetita:—the second thus writes (lib. i. cap. xxx. col. 1062); "Quum ALEA dicatur omnis ludis in varietate fortunæ consistens, "factum est, ut *figurata locutione* Alea sæpe sumatur; and the "third writer (cap. ii. col. 1135) quotes the definitions of various "other authors, beginning thus:—

"S. Isidorus, lib. xvii. cap. 57. ALEA est ludus tabulæ inventæ "a Græcis in otio Trojani belli a quodam milite, nomine Alea, a "quo et ars nomen accepit."

"Polydorus Virgilius, lib. ii. cap. 13. Ita apud nos sexcenti "sunt modi ludendi ad ALEAM: est enim ALEA omnis ferme ludus, "qui in varietate fortunæ consistit, ut sunt tesseræ cum primis, et "CHARTÆ LUSORIÆ, cum quibus qui se valde delectant, maxime "omnium semper egent."

"Sipontinus ad Præfat. Plinii. ALEA dicitur omnis ludus magna "ex parte in fortunæ varietate consistens, sed proprie de tesseris "dicitur.

"Raderus, ad lib. xiv. ep. xii. Mart. ALEA propria est hujus ludi, "quamvis de *omni generatim ludo* ALEÆ dicatur, speciatim tamen "tesseræ convenit."

"Ita enim Joh. Rauchbar, p. ii. quæst. xxv. num. xxiii. ALEA, "inquit, omnes fortunæ lusus tam simplices, quam mistos complec-"titur, ut sunt tesserarum, talorum vel taxillorum, cuborum, scru-"porum, astragalorum, CHARTARUM, vel FOLIORUM, lutriculæ (forte "latrunculorum), fritilli, equorum ligneorum."

The majority of these passages, it is evident, describes the word ALEA as a *generic* term, applicable, by *custom*, to all games of fortune. But Zani unaccountably thought otherwise.

" From all these definitions," says that writer, " and from the " many others that I might in this place have quoted, it appears to " me, we may infer that the word ALEA, as used by all the authors " who wrote before playing-cards were known, signified no other " than all sorts of games of dice, and more especially that game " which we translate from the Greek, *Aleossi*. Because, if we were " to extend its meaning so as to include playing-cards, we might " then insist that they had been in use from the earliest period of " the Christian æra, and even antecedent to it. For Hartzheim (vol. i. " p. 131) makes us acquainted with a manuscript of the Canons of " the Apostles which was given by Pope Adrian the First to the " King Charles, where, at cap. xlii. and xliii. are these words:

" Episcopus, aut Presbyter, aut Diaconus, *aleæ* atque ebrietati " deserviens, aut desinat, aut certe damnetur.

" Subdiaconus, aut Lector, aut Cantor similia faciens, aut desinat, " aut communione privetur. Similiter etiam Laicus."

It is not easy to comprehend Zani's meaning in the above passage. His inference is certainly a bad one; for the early occurrence of the term *alea*, supposing it to have been used generically, could never be brought in proof of the existence of any particular game, at any particular period; any more than the ancient use of the words quadruped, or tree, could be produced as evidence that any particular tree, or any particular quadruped, was known to the ancients. Zani proceeds:

" The great improbability that cards were ever intended to be " comprehended in the simple term *alea*, being thus *demonstrated*, it " becomes fair to argue, that the silence of the Synods, the Councils, " and the Edicts of Princes, as well as that of contemporaneous " authors, respecting playing-cards (inasmuch as the said Synods, &c. " prohibited *so many other games)*, proves most amply that, in their " time, they were not even invented; and that if they had been " invented, and it was thought proper to prohibit them, they would

" have been distinguished by the name by which they are called at
" present, or by some other which might have characterized them.
" For, otherwise, how could those, who were addicted to play, have
" known that *cards* were prohibited under the generic term *alea?*"

Zani's assumed demonstration, as has been just now observed, is inadmissible. Did we however find that the early Councils were constant in the *specific mention* of all the games of chance which they intended to prohibit, *their silence respecting cards,* until so late as 1491, would be favorable to his subsequent argument? But this does not appear to have been the case; and, consequently, his reasoning is far from being conclusive.

The word ALEA originally designated a particular game, which was *a game of chance.* It afterwards became a *generic term, embracing in its meaning all games, the result or success of which depended in a greater or less degree on chance, and was thus used in the early Councils.* In process of time, various other games of chance, different from those at first practised, came to be invented, and amongst the rest *Playing-Cards.* Does it follow as a necessary, or as a probable consequence, that because some of the newly invented games differed in their manner from those games of chance which were at first used, they should therefore be separately specified in the prohibitory decrees of Councils and Princes, who, under the generic term *alea,* had been long accustomed to forbid all games of fortune? Is it likely, as Zani has imagined, that a gamester of the thirteenth, fourteenth, or fifteenth century, supposing cards to have been then in use, could have been ignorant, that, under the term *alea,* they were intended to be prohibited? It may, indeed, be fairly contended that the use of the term *alea,* in any early council, is not sufficient to prove that cards were then known; since the term was undoubtedly used many centuries previous to the invention of cards: but it does not follow that cards could not then have been known, and intended to be prohibited under the term *alea,* because, as it was a generic word, it might very properly have included cards within its meaning.

The chief argument in favour of Zani's opinion, that I am aware of, (and, were there nothing to oppose to it, it would seem one of considerable weight) is, that Cards were particularly specified in the prohibitory decrees of later councils. But this argument becomes a weak one, when, in addition to the many opposing documents in favor of the antiquity of cards, given in the text, and others of the same kind which could be brought forward, it is observed, that although playing-cards are named in *some* of the later Councils, they are not in *all:* for we have seen them specifically prohibited in the Synodus Bambergensis, 1491, and yet no mention is made of them in the Synodus Varmiensis, in 1497.

When, in addition to such considerations, we call to mind, that undoubted evidence exists of the general use of playing-cards throughout many countries of Europe, long previous to 1490,* it

* *Jansen,* " Origine de la Gravure," tom. i. p. 88, has the following note: " Suivant " M. Neubronner, administrateur à Ulm, les " archives de cette ville contiennent un an- " cien manuscrit sur vélin, appelé le livre " rouge *(a literis initialibus rubris)* où il y a " une défense de jouer aux cartes, datée de " 1397."

Query: Can this be the Manuscript Chronicle, completed in 1474, in which Heineken discovered a memorandum relating to the exportation of playing-cards? See p. 80.

John I. king of Castile, is said to have prohibited cards in 1387. The authenticity of this document is questioned by *Zani,* (" *Materiali,*" p. 164, et seq.) but apparently upon insufficient grounds. *Mr. Strutt* (Sports and Pastimes, p. 285, 2d edition) tells us, on the authority of *Bullet,* that " the Provost of Paris, Jan. 22, A. D. 1397, published an ordinance, prohibiting the manufacturing part of the people from playing at tennis, dice, cards," &c. That cards were known in France prior to 1400, is, indeed, acknowledged by *Zani* himself; who cites a passage from the Sermons of Frere *Oliviero Maillard* (Lions, 1498), " Videtis quod habetis in sta- " tutis vestris: numquid *anno millesimo qua-* " *dringentesimo fuit prohibitum* quod omnes " *ludi chartarum,*" &c. &c.

Zani (" Materiali, "p. 155) seems incredulous concerning the existence of the book called Das gulden Spiel, mentioned by Heineken, and said to be printed by *Gunther Zainer* at Augsburg, in 1472 or 78, in which cards are said to have been introduced into Germany in the year 1300; and, indeed, if such an ancient printed book does exist, containing a passage respecting German playing-cards, it is of itself sufficient to overturn his system. That it does however exist, there can be little ground of doubt, since *Heineken* cited the original passage in the German, and mentioned the name of the printer; and the passage was also, as we have seen, cited by *Jansen,* a more recent author; with the *additional* intelligence, that

will not, I think, be going too far to conclude, that cards might have been intended to be prohibited, with other games of chance, by the early German Councils, under the generic term *alea;* and, at least, that their not being mentioned by a Council of any particular period, is no evidence that they were not then known.

But, independent of the probability that the early Councils might have intended the prohibition of cards under the generic term *alea*, other arguments, accounting, in some degree, for their silence respecting cards, may be adduced. There is reason to believe, as has already been suggested, (see note, p. 67) that, at first, they were considered as an innocent diversion; and it is also probable, that for some time after they had begun to degenerate into a means of gambling, especially confined, perhaps, to the higher classes of society, they might escape ecclesiastical censure.

Cards, as is well known, are, in Spain, termed *naipes;* by which name, with the alteration only of the *p* into a *b*, they were also anciently known in Italy; although in this latter country they were likewise called *carte*. It would appear from the following passage in the "Cronica del Giovanni Morelli," of the year 1393, that as late as that period the Italians considered cards in the light of an innocent and childish amusement: "Non giuocare a Zara, nè ad altro giuoco "di dadi, fa de' giuochi che usano i fanciulli; agli aliossi, alla trottola, "a' ferri, a' *naibi*, etc.—Not to play at hazard, or at other games of "dice, but at such plays as are used by children, as cockle-shells, "tops, ferri (I know not what this game was), *cards*," &c.*

But after the year 1400 they began to be considered no longer so, and were severely censured by S. Bernardino; who, in his forty-second

the book was printed at *Augsburg*, and the alteration of its date (perhaps a correction), from 1472 to 1478.

As to the foreign cards, the importation of which into England, was prohibited under Edward the Fourth, I am aware that it is possible they might have been French, Spanish, or Italian cards. It is, however, quite as probable that they were the manufacture of Germany or the Low Countries.

* *Morelli* was born in 1371, and *began* to write his work in 1393. It was printed at Florence in 1718. The passage cited is at p. 270. *Zani*, p. 182.

Sermon, " contra Alearum Ludos," (artic. iii. cap. 11,) says: " Et " idem est judicium sicut de tabulariis, ita etiam de tabellis . . . . . " taxillis . . . . . taxillorum . . . . . Tertiæ autem participantes " sunt qui fiunt participes ex *naibis seu carticellis*, de quibus innu- " merabilia mala egrediuntur;" and at cap. iii. he repeats, " Sed " etiam contra omnes tabularia, taxillos, et *carticellas* . . . . . sicut " sunt tabularia, taxilli, et *carticellæ, sive naibi.*"

Saint Antonino, archbishop of Florence, who was born in 1389, and died in 1459, also speaks of cards as no longer amongst the amusements of children, although he is not quite so severe in his expressions respecting them as S. Bernardino. After mentioning games of hazard, he says, " Et idem videtur de *chartis, vel naibis*, " quamvis sit ibi aliquid industriæ, principaliter tamen est fortunæ. " Ludus autem scaccorum non est fortunæ; sed industriæ." *

Upon the whole, it appears probable that, although cards had been long before known in Italy, as well as in other parts of Europe, they did not come into general use, as affording the means of amusement and gambling to grown persons, until after the year 1400. Although even this datum must be taken in a limited sense; since card-playing appears to have prevailed sooner in some countries than in others. But to return to the subject of engraving on wood.

I have already expressed the opinion that wood engraving was first introduced into Europe by the Venetians; that the latter got this art from China; and that, in the course of the commerce which took place between Venice and the continent of Europe, the art gradually became known. I have also argued from the decree of the govern-

* These two passages from the writings of S. Bernardino and S. Antonino will be found in *Zani* (pp. 171 and 177), who has, indeed, collected together a prodigious number of passages, from old as well as modern writers, relative to cards; without, however, coming to any conclusion as to the antiquity of their use. I have no doubt that my friend Mr. Singer, in his treatise on this subject, will know how to turn these documents (which ZANI has thrown together, and left in the shape of *materials*) to their proper account.

ment of Venice, dated 1441, that, some time prior to that period, it had been improved by the artists of other parts, who, as we have seen, became, in their turn, exporters of playing-cards and other wood-prints.

The inhabitants of Germany and the Low Countries appear more especially to have devoted themselves with eagerness to the practice of this art; their productions in which, it is probable, began to constitute a branch of their commerce soon after the year 1400.*

If we may believe Heineken, who quotes the authority of an ancient Chronicle in manuscript, which he found at Ulm, "they "used to send their playing-cards in large bales, as well into Italy, "as to Sicily and other parts, by sea, receiving in return for them "spices and other merchandize."† The term *kartenmacher*, or card-maker, is mentioned in the Burger-buche of Augsburg, in 1418;‡ and in that of Nurenberg, in 1433 and 1438;§ and certain it is, that, from the commencement of the fifteenth century, it is a more easy task to trace the history and progress of wood-engraving

* So we may fairly infer from the Venetian decree, if the supposition be admitted, that some of the foreign wood engravings which it prohibited were the productions of Germany, or the Low Countries.

† Heineken quotes the words in the German (*Idée Générale*, p. 245), but without informing us of the date of the manuscript, or of the period to which the passage refers.

In his Neue Nachrichten (1786), p. 139, he is more explicit: for, besides again quoting the original passage (although with some slight verbal alteration; and, consequently, we may presume, with more accuracy), he informs us that it is found in an old Chronicle, finished in 1474, preserved in the library of the Stadthouse of Ulm. In der Stadtbibliothek zu Ulm fand ich eine Chronike der Stadt Ulm in Manuscripte, wo am Ende steht: Georg Zylin, complevit hoc opus 1474, und unter der Rubrik:

Charten Spiel-Handel.

Die Spiel Charten wurden leglenweiss (das ist in kleinen Fassern) in Italien, Sicilien, auch uber Meer geschickt, gegen Specereen und andere Waaren verstochen, woraus die Menge der Chartenmacher, so sich hier aufgehalten, abzunehmen ist.

The above memorandum being written (perhaps after the book was completed) under the Rubrick, it is impossible to determine to what period it relates.

‡ *Brietkopf*, "Ursprung der Spielkarten" —2 Thiel. It is remarkable that the earliest mention of the term "Kartenmacher" in Germany, is found in the records of the city of *Augsburg*, which was one of *the principal depots of the ancient Venetian merchants.*

§ *Heineken*, Neue Nachrichten, p. 138.

in those countries, by a reference to existing monuments of its early use, preserved in the libraries of old monasteries, and the cabinets of the curious, than in Italy, where there is reason to believe the art was not prosecuted with equal diligence, and, consequently, did not attain that perfection which might ensure to it the same encouragement and general regard.

" The artists who engraved in wood," says Heineken, " were " termed, in Germany, FORMSCHNEIDER, (cutters of moulds) an ap- " pellation by which they are still known. But they no longer form " a separate body as they did anciently, and are now very much " neglected, in consequence of the decided preference which has " so long been given to engravings on copper.

" The method adopted in printing wood engravings of saints and " other subjects," continues Heineken, " was anciently the same " as that used in the manufacture of cards. After the engraved " block was charged with the black tint, a sheet of paper was laid " upon it, which was damped,* that it might the more easily attach " itself to the block; the friction of a rubber, made of hair, or of " pieces of cloth, was then applied to the paper, which was thus " rubbed backwards and forwards till the impression of the engraving " was transferred to the paper. The traces of this operation will " readily be discovered by any person who examines our ancient " wood-prints, and the old books of devotional representations " printed only on one side of the leaf; the back of the paper being " generally found polished, and sometimes soiled by the process of " rubbing off the impression.

" Besides these engraved blocks, the manufacturers of cards em- " ployed thin plates of metal cut into holes, to guide them in finish- " ing their cards with colours. Of these patterns or stensils it was " necessary for them to have several, according to the number of " the colours which the figures on their cards required. This," says

* I have given my reasons for being of opinion that the paper was often used dry in this mode of printing wood engravings, in a note at p. 34.

Heineken, (desirous to support the hypothesis that wood engraving owes its origin to cards) "naturally gave rise to the practice of "illuminating wood-prints of other kinds, of which we so often find "examples in our ancient books:" as if the origin of the custom of colouring prints of all sorts, might not, with equal verisimilitude, be traced to the illuminations in ancient manuscripts. "These "colourers," continues he, "formed also a distinct body, under "the appellation of BRIEFMALER (painters of cards)."*

Jost Ammon, in the cuts which he executed for the well known book of Arts and Trades, published in 1564, has represented amongst the rest, the figure and employment of the *Formschneider*, or engraver in wood; and separately, the figure and occupation of the *Briefmaler*, or painter of cards;—treating them as distinct trades: but Merian, who inserted the same figures of Jost Ammon in the German translation of *Garzoni, Piazza Universale*, published at Francfort, in 4to. in 1649, has employed the figure of the *Briefmaler*, to represent the card-maker, because in his time the person who painted the cards, and had formerly been termed *Briefmaler*, was known by the appellation of *Kartenmacher*.†

The same persons who manufactured cards, says Heineken, sold also the prints of saints; from which kind of traffic they had the better reason to expect good profits, as the devotion of the people of Germany for the images of saints, was excessive during the fourteenth and at the commencement of the fifteenth century; and as the clergy distributed such pieces amongst the populace upon all occasions.

The above writer saw in the library of Wolfenbuttel several prints of this kind, "representing stories of sacred writ and other devo-"tional subjects, with some text opposite to the figures; the whole

* *Idée Générale*, pp. 243, 244.

† Idée Générale, p. 244. There is some obscurity in this passage, in the original. *Heineken*'s meaning, I believe, was, that anciently, the Briefmaler was a person whose employment it was to illumine playing-cards as well as other wood-prints, but that, afterwards, the Briefmaler and the Kartenmacher, or manufacturer of playing-cards, became two distinct trades.

" engraved in wood. These pieces," says he, " are of the same " dimensions as our playing-cards: they measure three inches and " a quarter in height, by two inches and a half in width. There " are also, in the same library, at the end of the book intitled *Ars* " *Moriendi*, five prints, in which are engraved divers figures of " angels, devils, dying persons, saints, &c. similar to our playing- " cards, and of the same size,—each figure being marked with a let- " ter of the alphabet."*

The dimensions of the prints which Heineken here describes, furnished, in his opinion, a strong evidence that they had been made in imitation of cards;—that cards had been their prototype. Now, if I can judge from his account of them, the first of these engravings must have been printed on paper of a duodecimo size, and then doubled; for each devout representation had some text facing it, alluding, no doubt, to its subject: so that the resemblance between these prints and playing-cards could not, after all, have been very great. The five prints which he found at the end of the *Ars Moriendi* were, each of them, marked with a letter of the alphabet,—no doubt a proof that they were part of a set. Now, in another part of his book he informs us " that playing cards were " termed in Germany, **Briefe**—letters, (*epistolæ*) and that they " are so called to this day. The common people do not say, give " me a game or a pack of cards, but a **Spiel Briefe**, (a game or a " pack of letters) or I want a card, but I want **ein Briefe**, that is, I " want a letter."† This observation is used by Heineken to shew that the Germans did not get their playing-cards from the French; " for if we had had them originally from France," says he, " they " would have retained the same name with us by which they were " anciently known and are still called in France."

But I must observe that whatever weight this remark may be entitled to, as furnishing an argument to prove that the Germans did not get their cards from France, it is very far from assisting to support its writer's hypothesis, that the use of cards gave rise to

* Idée Générale, p. 249. † Ibid. p. 240.

the invention of engraving in wood, and the subsequent application of that art to the manufacture of the images of saints, and other devotional pieces; since we might more reasonably conjecture from it, that the persons who manufactured and sold these prints of saints, &c. each accompanied with some short inscription, or marked with a letter of the alphabet, were, on that account, termed *Briefmaler* (painters of letters—*epistolæ*) than that they were so called because they manufactured cards, which in their nature bear no analogy to letters whatever.

It is therefore probable that the term Briefmaler was used in Germany before playing-cards, such as are now used, were known in that country; and applied to denominate those artizans who manufactured these sets of coloured images of saints and other religious subjects, accompanied, perhaps, by short admonitory sentences. And, if the rage for holy mysteries and religious games, so general throughout Europe in the centuries which preceded the Reformation, be considered, it will not be a very extravagant stretch of conjecture to suppose, that, in early times, a set of those devout representations, accompanied by inscriptions, and marked with the letters of the alphabet, might even have been termed a Spiel Briefe,* or a game

* Since writing the above, I have been favored by Mr. Singer with a passage extracted from a writer of the sixteenth century, by which it appears that, even as late as that period, sets of prints, such as I have described, (though others seem to have been of profane subjects) continued to be manufactured and sold under the appellation of *cards;* although playing-cards, such as are now used, had long before become common.

"Chartæ lusoriæ variis in locis impresse, elegantissime, aut Parisiis apud Wechelium cum sententiis veterum poetarum: et aliæ cum rythmis Gallicis; et aliæ in Germania cum sententiis Biblicis lingua vernacula."—*Pandectarum seu Partitionum Universalium,* CONRADI GESNERI. *Tiguri* 1548. *fol. Titulus* xii. *de Grammatica, fol.* 17.

Gesner's book is little other than an index to books which treat upon general subjects. The above passage, for example, is the only one on cards, and is given without any comment. The reader, indeed, is referred to *Ludovicus Vives,* who, in his dialogue called "*Ludus Chartarum seu Foliorum,*" p. 48, *edit. Basil,* 1555, gives a short account of Spanish and French packs of cards, but says nothing of their origin.

A further argument in support of my hypothesis, has been furnished by my friend,

or pack of letters; and used, perhaps, as a devout recreation, in a way not very dissimilar from that in which cards appear to have been used upon their first introduction into Europe;—that is, without any relation to gambling.

The persons whose occupation it had been to fabricate these sets of devout images, were of course the best fitted to execute and manufacture any other sorts of work that required the same process: playing-cards being afterwards introduced into Germany, they would, therefore, presently apply themselves to the manufactory of them; still, however, retaining the appellation of Briefmaler (painters of letters) by which they had been originally designated; and in like manner these new productions might be termed Spiel Briefe, because they were packages or sets of coloured prints, issuing from the workshop of the Briefmaler.*

Mr. Fuseli, an artist whose elevated and powerful genius is no less honorable to Switzerland which gave it birth, than the example of his works, and the eloquence of his discourses, have proved beneficial to the arts in the country which he has adopted. "In the vulgar tongue of Zuric," says Mr. Fuseli, "and still more in that of the "Roman Catholic Cantons of Switzerland, "*Helgen* which is a corruption of *Heiligen* "—holy—saints—is used to denote a figured "print—*Estampe*. The reason for this is "evident—the first prints represented the "figures of saints or other devotional subjects, and were, on that account, termed "*Helgen*; the term, in process of time, "became generic, and is now used to denote prints of any kind, even of the most "profane subjects."

I was not aware, when I framed the above hypothesis, that such evidence could be brought forward in its support.

* Nevertheless, if I may depend upon *Heineken* "Neue Nachrichten," p. 138, no mention of the term *Briefmaler* is found in the old German Chronicles, so early as there is of the term *Kartenmacher*. Still that writer insists, and *Brietkopf*, he says, is of the same opinion, that the term *Briefe* is more ancient than that of *Karten*, cards. The term *Kartenmacher*, as has already been observed, occurs in 1418, in the *Burgerbuche* of Augsburgh.

Heineken argues "that all writings in "which the term *Kartenmacher* or *Karten-maler* is found, are more modern than the "invention of *printed* playing-cards, in Germany;" (here, no doubt, he means to infer, that though the Italians first introduced the use of cards, the Germans first discovered the art of *engraving and printing* them) "and if," says he, "you find mention, in "the city books of Nuremberg, in 1433, of "a *Kartenmacherin*, and, in 1438, of a

Here, then, is an hypothesis which appears to be full as well supported by evidence, and as reasonable as that of Heineken. It is, however, but an hypothesis, and may require further proof. If true, it necessarily carries back the art of engraving in wood, in Germany and the Low Countries, to a much earlier epoch than that from which the German writers have hitherto been accustomed to date its origin; and they will consequently pardon me for having suggested it.

Besides these small cuts, however, the old artists of Germany and the Low Countries engraved devotional subjects of larger dimensions. One of these, bearing every mark of high antiquity, I am enabled to present to the reader, by favour of the Right Hon. the Earl Spencer, K. G. who possesses the original, and has most obligingly permitted it to be copied for the present work.

By the inscription over the head of the figure, which is nevertheless, in part, unintelligible, being a good deal rubbed, we discover that it was intended to represent ST. BRIDGET, who is seated writing. The figure evinces itself the work of an artist of no mean talents:

" *Kartenmalerin*, (whereas you do not find " mention of a *Briefmaler*, until 1477,) it " only proves that printed playing-cards, or " *Briefe*, were invented before 1433, and " that already, in 1433, they were known in " Germany by the name of *Karten*, cards; " but that, towards the year 1477, the pro- " fession of *Kartenmacher* had become se- " parated from that of the *Briefmaler*, or " illuminist of wood-prints in general."—— " The word *Karten*," he says, " is de- " rived from the word *Cartone*, and owes its " introduction to the commerce of the Ger- " mans with Italy."

" Playing-cards," Heineken again observes, " are still called by the ancient term, *Briefe*, " in some provinces, and especially in country- " places."

The above passage, if I may be allowed to interpret it in my own way, will be found rather confirmatory than otherwise of the hypothesis in the text.

I suppose that the better informed classes of the community discovered, before 1433, that the ancient term *Briefe* was, by no means, an appropriate appellation for playing-cards, *such as were then in use*; and very properly changed it for the foreign name, *Karten*—cards—to distinguish cards from other prints; especially those of sacred images; whereas the common people satisfied themselves with calling them by their old name, little mindful of its etymology; and never considering that their *Spiel Briefe* were no longer what they had been.

drigita bit
goterruns
spor
michi

the proportions are good; the attitude is easy and natural; and the folds of the drapery are marked with intelligence, and well cast. The face and hands are expressed with few lines, but in a masterly manner. On the other hand, the total absence of every principle of perspective, in the bench upon which St. Bridget is seated, and the desk which supports her book, is very remarkable; and gives to the entire composition an effect not very unlike that of the figures of the Evangelists, sometimes found in manuscripts of the very early centuries.*

Upon the whole, I am inclined to consider this engraving as the production of an artist of the Low Countries, (where a better style of art prevailed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, than was common, in those times, in Germany,) and of a date not later than the close of the fourteenth century: since, after that period, an artist, who was capable of designing so good a figure, could scarcely have been so grossly ignorant of every effect of linear perspective, as was evidently the case with the author of the performance before us.†

The impression appears to have been taken off, with a light tint

* It has, by the bye, a good deal of resemblance to the Greek drawing of St. Luke, engraved in my "Italian School of Design."

† I shall leave the partisans of Lawrence Janszoon, or Coster, to make what they can of the armorial bearings introduced in one corner of this ancient engraving. Lawrence bore the same arms, but with the addition of a bar of bastardy and a *lambel*, as appears by his seal given in *Meerman*. The lion in the print of St. Bridget is tinted yellow, and half the shield (that part of it which is under the animal's feet and belly) is of a dark crimson: but I think no conclusion as to the proper blazoning of the arms, can be drawn from this circumstance; as the print appears to have been coloured without the smallest degree of care.

"Ces armoiries," says *Jansen*, "de l'Invention de l'Imprimerie," (p. 53.) speaking of Coster's seal, of which he also has given a copy, "qui sont celles de la famille du fils prûné d'un des premiers comtes de Hollande, ont été portées par quelques-unes des plus illustres maisons de ce pays, telles que celle de Brederode, de Teylingen, de Langerack, de Soutelande, et de Warmont," &c. It is possible that the same arms might have been borne by some town or monastery in the Low Countries, where the print, perhaps, was published.

in distemper, by means of friction, in the manner already described, and was afterwards rudely daubed over with a few gay colours, which were not, I think, laid on by means of stensils, such as, it is supposed, were used in painting cards, but by the hand. These colours, as they very much obscure the merit of the original print, are omitted in the copy.*

If we can depend upon the correctness of M. Thiery,† the library of the academy at Lyons possesses a print, pasted into a folio volume, entitled "La Legende Dorée," at the bottom of which is inscribed SCHOTING of NUREMBERG, with the date 1384. He adds, that another engraving, still more ancient, is preserved in the library of the Vatican at Rome.

Of the more ancient print in the Vatican I have no account, and I am obliged to add, that I find no mention of the Nuremberg print of 1384, in the recent French writers on the subject of engraving. Perhaps they discovered, upon examination, that what Thiery took for a 3, was in reality a figure of 4, or even a 5. But it is very possible that the Parisian authors may not have been at the trouble to visit Lyons for the purpose, and that the date may be genuine. This, I much hope, may prove to be the case; as we are, it must be confessed, greatly in want of documents with which to fill up the chasm between the epoch of the two Cunio, and that of the

* The face and hands are lightly tinted with flesh colour. The hat and the wallet, supported upon the pilgrim's staff, and the drapery of St. Bridget (except the veil upon her head, part of which is black, and the remainder, with the thin drapery folded round her throat, white) are of a tint similar to that of soot diluted with much water. The bench upon which St. Bridget is seated, and the desk, the staff, the letters S. P. Q. R. the glories round the head of the saint, and those round the Virgin and Child, the lion in the coat of arms and the crown, are tinted a bright yellow. The ground is coloured with verdigrease. The last part of the operation of the illuminist, appears to have been that of giving what he, no doubt, considered a few masterly touches, with a sort of lake, mixed with a large proportion of gum, which has occasioned those parts to have a shining appearance. The broad border round the print is of this colour.

† "Guide des Amateurs, &c. à Paris," 1787. pp. 427, 428.

decree of the government of Venice. For although the retrospective allusions of that decree render it evidence that the art of wood engraving had been practised at Venice very long previous to its date; still, for the sake of those who will not be satisfied with any thing short of a due array of stubborn and incontrovertible proofs, I would gladly be enabled to produce other monuments of its ancient use: and I cannot conceal my surprise that Zani, who argued in favour of the authenticity of the account of the two Cunio, should not have perceived, that by endeavouring, as he did, to throw doubt upon almost all other early records of wood engraving, he was doing all in his power to render that account the more difficult of belief.

The earliest print, bearing a date, of the existence of which we have at present any certain knowledge, was discovered by Heineken; who thus described it in his writings: "I found," says he, "in the "Chartreuse at Buxheim, near Memmingen, one of the most an- "cient convents in Germany, a print of 'SAINT CHRISTOPHER carry- "ing the infant Jesus across the sea:' opposite to him is the hermit "holding up his lantern to give him light; and behind is a "peasant, seen in a back view, carrying a sack, and climbing the "ascent of a steep mountain. This piece is of a folio size, and "coloured in the manner of our playing-cards; at the bottom of it "is this inscription:

"Cristoferi faciem die quacunque tueris,
"Illa nempe die morte mala non morieris.
"Millesimo cccc° xx tercio.

"At least," continues Heineken, "we know from this piece, "with certainty, that the figures of saints, and, also, letters, were "engraved in 1423. Nor can any fraud be suspected in this in- "stance. The print is pasted within the cover of an old book of "the fifteenth century." "Some one of the ancient monks of

" the convent perhaps desired to preserve it, and at that time no " one troubled himself about the Antiquity of Engraving, or dis- " puted upon the question."*

It was due to Heineken that I should describe this most interesting specimen of early wood engraving in his own words; since, but for his research, it might have continued to lie unnoticed in the convent of Buxheim, perhaps, for centuries to come. It has now found an asylum worthy of so precious and rare a document, in the splendid library of Earl Spencer, where it is preserved in the same state in which Heineken discovered it, pasted in the inside of one of the covers of a manuscript in the Latin language,† of the year 1417. Lord Spencer, with a liberality for which he is eminently distinguished, has permitted it to be faithfully copied, of the same dimensions as the original, for the present work; and the reader will therefore be a competent judge of its merits,—except as respects the colours, with which, like the last described print, it was tinted after printing, and which it has been judged proper to omit, that its true pretensions, as a work of engraving, may the better appear.

I shall say but a few words concerning this engraving, as a work of art. The principal group is composed with dignity; and, indeed, as respects its arrangement, is not inferior to many pictures of the same subject, executed by esteemed artists of later times. The reciprocity between St. Christopher and the sacred infant, is well conceived; the head of the saint is expressive; and the drapery, floating over his shoulder, is folded in a grand style. But the extremities, and some other parts of the figures, are so defective in point of drawing, as to give reason to suspect that the artist, who

* " Idée Générale," p. 250.

† The MS. is entitled " LAUS VIRGINIS." See *Mr. Dibdin's* " Bibliotheca Spenceriana," vol. i. p. iv. Mr. Dibdin has given a *fac-simile* of the group of *St. Christopher and the Child*, and another of the *Angel*, in the print of " The Annunciation," in the same volume; both of the dimensions of the originals, and accurately executed. A bad copy of the print of " St. Christopher" is introduced in *Jansen's* work so often cited, copied, I believe, from one made by *De Murr*.

Cristofori faciem die quacumque tueris
Illa nempe die morte mala non moriaris
Millesimo cccc°
xx° tercio

prepared the design from which the print was immediately engraved, had no part in the invention of the piece; except that of introducing the fish under the feet of the saint, the diminutive mill in the fore-ground, and the other accessories; all of them so far beneath criticism, that one would almost suppose it had been his intention, by surrounding St. Christopher with such absurdities, to bring the saint into disrepute.

Within the other cover of the same manuscript, another wood-print is pasted, representing "THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE VIRGIN." It is undoubtedly the production of the same artist who engraved the St. Christopher, although being free from some of the above defects, it is a more agreeable print. The subject did not require the introduction of naked limbs, which the best painters of those times were but ill qualified to design; whereas it allowed fuller scope to the artist's abilities in casting drapery,—a part of the art with the principles of which even the most inferior designers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were not unacquainted. Both these prints were, I think, originally printed on the same paper; which was probably intended to be folded, and inserted in that state in a book of devotion; when, as was the case with the ancient *Dyptici*, and many of the small portable altar-pictures of those times, the two subjects would have faced each other. They are of the same height, and very nearly of an equal breadth; are printed upon a paper rather thick than otherwise, with black oil-colour, or what is commonly termed printing-ink, and are tinted, (apparently at the time), with precisely the same colours.

It is further remarkable, that these prints shew no signs of having been taken off, like the St. Bridget, by means of friction, but were evidently printed with a press.

In this respect, and in the black ink with which they are printed, they differ from all the very early wood-prints of Germany, or the Netherlands, that I am acquainted with; these latter (I speak more especially of the ancient block-books) being taken off with a brownish tint, apparently in distemper, by means of friction.

The invention of the press has been commonly considered contemporary with the invention of typography; because we find no instance in which it appears to have been used, in Germany, or the Low Countries, previous to its application for the purpose of printing moveable characters. A proper black ink for printing made its appearance in Germany simultaneously with the introduction of the press; and the first Bible that issued from the press of Guttenberg, at Mentz, soon after 1450, is printed with ink, which, for blackness and consistency, has never been since surpassed.

Here, however, are two specimens of engraved wooden blocks executed in 1423—for there appears no ground whatever to dispute the date—and printed with black printing-ink, and a press.

I am aware that it is possible, notwithstanding the blocks were engraved in 1423, that the impressions might have been taken off some thirty or forty years afterwards:* but this is certainly not very probable. I am rather inclined to be of opinion, that although neither the press, nor a black oil-colour, were used for printing wood engravings in Germany, or the Netherlands, at so early a period, they might have been elsewhere.

What if these two prints should prove to be—not the productions of Germany, but rather of Venice, or of some district of the territory then under the dominion of that republic?

It may be remembered that the decree of Venice of 1441, speaks of such figures as being absolutely printed "Carte e figure STAM-

* I know of no certain specimen of wood engraving, printed with *a press, and black printing-ink, in Germany or the Low Countries, prior* to the years 1461 and 1462.

Of the first date, there exists, in the library of Wolfenbuttel, a book of fables, illustrated by a hundred and two wood-cuts, which was printed at Bamberg, by Albrecht Pfister. It is mentioned by *Heineken* ("Idée Générale," p. 275), who has given a copy of one of the prints.

Another work of the same printer, also decorated with wood engravings (if, indeed, such miserable designs can properly be termed decorations), is in the possession of Lord Spencer, and will be found described in the first volume of *Mr. Dibdin*'s "Bibliotheca Spenceriana." It is known by the name of "The Histories of Joseph, Daniel, Judith, and Esther," is dated 1462, and is a book of such extreme rarity, that only one other copy of it is known.

PIDE che si fanno in Venezia." It is true the decree applies the same term to the cards and other wood-cuts which were imported from other parts; but this would naturally occur: as those who framed the decree cannot be supposed to have examined the backs of such prints as came from Flanders, Germany, or other parts, that they might distinguish whether they were taken off by friction, or in the manner practised in Venice, by means of a press. It was sufficient that the Venetians saw a great number of wood-cuts of foreign manufacture, which operated to the detriment of their own artists; the different process by which they might have been executed was a matter of no importance, and it is probable was never noticed by them.

This ancient use of the word *printed* (stampide), in the Venetian decree, did not escape the notice of Heineken. "Printing," says he, "was not yet known, and yet the word printing was used."* I wish that writer had informed us whether the word printing was in use at so early a period in Germany. I am inclined to think it was not.†

Nevertheless, as these prints were found in Germany,‡ I should not have suggested a doubt that they were the productions of any other

* Idée, &c. p. 246.

† *Heineken*, after describing an edition of the Block-book, called the Book of *Anti-Christ*, "Idée Générale," p. 392, says: "à la "fin de ce texte l'éditeur dit: Der Jung- "hanns's priffmaler hat das puch zu Nuren- "berg, 1472. *Le Junghannss peintre de* "*cartes a ce livre à Nuremberg en* 1472, "sans avoir ajouté, s'il a dessiné, ou gravé, "ou seulement imprimè cet ouvrage."

An edition of the *Ars Moriendi*, mentioned by Heineken (p. 421), ends with a similar colophon:

Hans Sporer, 1473, hat diss puch pruff-maler.

I doubt whether the term printing was used in Germany or the Netherlands until after the establishment of typography.

‡ Buxheim, however, it may be worth remarking, is at no great distance from Augsburg; which, in the fifteenth century, and some centuries earlier, was one of the great depots of the Venetian merchants, through which, by land-carriage, they furnished the southern parts of Germany with the numerous articles of their commerce and manufacture. A print of this age, being found in Germany, is, therefore, by no means a *certain* proof that it is of German manufacture. See *Bettinelli* "Risorgimento d'Italia," tom. ii. pp. 284. 301.

than the German school, were it not that the print of the Annunciation, especially, bears so striking a resemblance to the style of the old Italian schools as, of itself, to furnish a very strong ground for such an opinion.

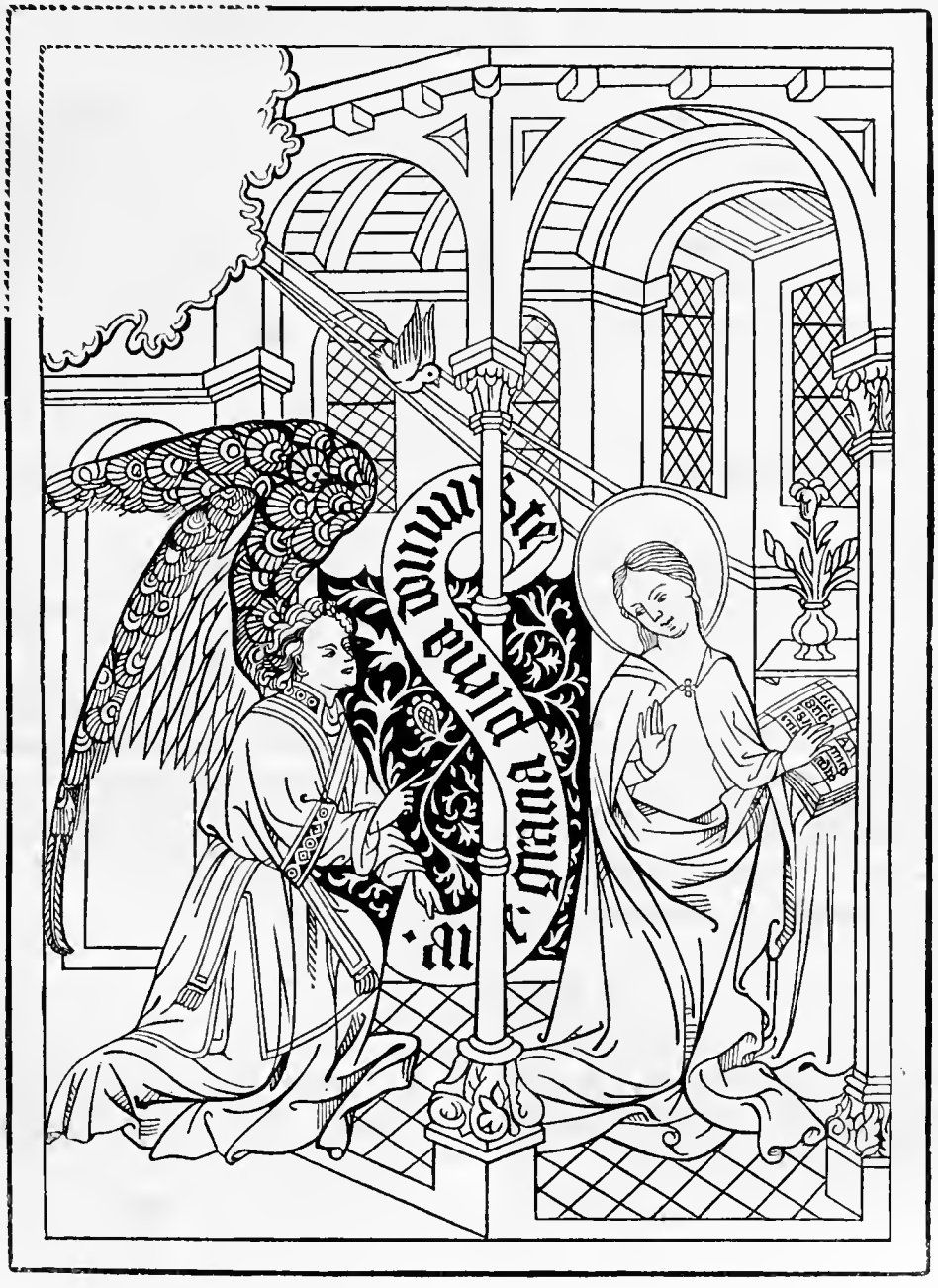
Those who are acquainted with the style of art which, founded by Giotto, and promulgated by his school, prevailed more or less throughout Italy, from the beginning of the fourteenth until towards the middle of the fifteenth century, will, I think, discover this similitude in the general arrangement of the composition—the simplicity and lightness of the architecture, with unornamented circular arches, supported by a single slender pillar, and pilasters—the graceful attitude of the Virgin—and especially her drapery, which, wholly unlike the angular sharpness, the stiffness, and the flutter of the ancient German school, is divided into a few easy folds, by lines of gentle curvature.*

After all I may possibly be mistaken in my opinion;† and lest,

* The upper corner of this print, on the left, where, no doubt, the figure of God the Father was introduced, has been torn of; probably by some Iconoclast of the sixteenth century.

† Let the amateurs of Venice, and other parts of Italy, search the libraries of their ancient convents: perhaps specimens of early Italian xylography, subject to no such doubt, may still be found. Meanwhile I feel myself justified in assuring the reader that I have not, hitherto, discovered any thing which militates against the opinion given in the text. The characters in the inscriptions on these two prints are, it is true, what are commonly called German, or black-letter; but such characters as Lanzi observes ("*Storia Pittorica*," tom. i. p. 34—92), prevailed very generally throughout Italy, and more especially in the inscription on pictures, &c. until towards the middle of the fifteenth century. I have now before me a *fac-simile* of the inscription on the monument of *Francesco de Flore*, a Venetian painter (the father of *Jacobello del Flore*, also a painter), dated 1433, in Gothic or semi-gothic characters. Unfortunately, it is all written in capitals, whereas the inscriptions on the two prints before us are almost entirely in minuscules; the C is formed in precisely the same manner as that with which the inscription commences in the print of St. Christopher. Indeed the inscriptions on these two prints are in characters of somewhat a less Gothic form than those commonly found on the early wood-cuts of Germany, or the Low Countries, and are less perplexed by abbreviations.

in that case, I should mislead others, I have caused the print to be copied on a reduced scale; that those, who have not an opportunity of seeing the original, may have some means afforded them of judging for themselves.



The next print in point of antiquity, hitherto known, bearing a date, of the authenticity of which there appears no ground of doubt, is a wood engraving of a quarto size, which was found in the Abbey of St. Blasius, in the Black Forest. It represents "The Martyrdom "of St. Sebastian," and is dated 1437: under it is a prayer (doubtless printed from the same block), and a repetition of the date, thus: M.CCCC.XXXVII.*

Jansen informs us, that "M. Krismer, the librarian to the con- "vent of the Chartreuse, at Buxheim," where the St. Christopher was discovered, "shewed De Murr an ancient wood engraving, "coloured in the manner used by the German card-makers, which "was pasted into a manuscript, entitled, 'Sermonum Partem "'Hyemalen, de Nicolas Dunkelspül.' This print, which is seven "inches and a half in height, by five inches and a half in width, "is very much soiled, having been printed with a rubber. De Murr "says, that he cannot compare it with any other ancient wood "engraving that he has seen, although he is acquainted with so "many. It contains three subjects; the upper part of the print "being divided by a thick perpendicular line, into two compart- "ments, each of three inches in height. In the compartment to "the right, St. Dorothy is represented, seated in a garden; the "infant Jesus is offering her roses, with which he has his lap filled. "Before her is a basket full of the same flowers. In the left com- "partment, St. Alexis is represented lying at the foot of some steps, "upon which stands a man, who is pouring liquor upon him out of "a vase. Near the perpendicular line before mentioned, is the "following date, written with a pen:

"*Anno dn.* 1.4.4.3.

"The characters and the ink are conformable to the body of the "manuscript. This date indicates the time when the copyist finished

* *Heineken*, Neue Nachrichten, p. 143.

" it, and caused it to be bound; as is confirmed by the inscription at " the end of the volume. The lower part of the print is entirely " occupied by a representation of Christ bearing his cross, at the " moment when he is met by his mother, whom one of the soldiers " is pushing aside. Simon of Cyrene raises the end of the cross to " assist our Saviour in carrying it. The style of the engraving is " very rude." *

It is evident that this print, which like the preceding was most probably of German manufacture, must have been executed previous to 1443.

It appears that the old German wood engravers manufactured prodigious quantities of these religious cuts. Heineken relates, that in one of his journeys through Franconia, Swabia, Bavaria, and the Austrian territories, he visited the libraries of many of the ancient convents; and that he found great numbers of them pasted at the beginning, and at the end, of the old books of the fifteenth century. " Thus," says he, " these images, which were dispersed and lost " amongst the laity, were, in part, preserved by the monks, who " pasted them into the first printed books with which they orna- " mented their libraries." † Heineken might have added; and into their more ancient manuscripts, of which we have just had examples.

There can be little doubt that the custom of engraving the images of saints, and other devout representations, prevailed in Germany and the Low Countries at least as early as the fourteenth century; and it is very probable that specimens of that age may still exist among the wood-prints preserved in the German convents; ‡ although from the want of dates upon them, it may now be

* *Jansen*, " Origine de la Gravure," &c. tom. i. p. 236.

† " Idée Générale," p. 251.

‡ It will occur to the reader, that in these respects the Germans have the advantage of the Dutch; who, since the establishment of the Protestant religion in their country, and the consequent abolition of their convents, possess fewer means of producing similar evidence of the antiquity of their wood engraving.

difficult, or even impossible, to distinguish them from the wood-cuts of the fifteenth century.

In process of time, the practice gave rise to a more extended application of the principle of impression:—"After having pro-"duced the representations of saints," says Heineken, "it was not "difficult for the artist to engrave historical subjects, and entire "sets of prints, and to accompany them with explanations of their "meaning, engraved in the same manner on wood; whether for "the instruction of youth, or for the purpose of exciting devotion. "And thus," says he, "originated our first books printed from "engraved wooden blocks."* But of these I shall speak in the next chapter.

* "Idée Générale," p. 251.

CHAPTER III.

Early Block-Books of Germany and the Low Countries. Probability that some of them are as early as 1420. *The Artists, who executed them unknown—and even the Schools to which most of them appertain. Sketch of the Amelioration and Advancement of the Arts in the Low Countries. Few of the Block-Books have any thing to recommend them, except their Antiquity. The best of them are probably the Productions of Flanders, or of Holland. Three of them described—The* Biblia Pauperum ; Historia, seu Providentia Virginis Mariæ, ex Cantico Canticorum ; Speculum Humanæ Salvationis. *Brief Recapitulation of the foregoing Documents—Introduction of Wood-cuts into some of the first Books printed in Italy.*

AT what period the wood engravers of Germany, and the Low Countries, began to illustrate their sets of prints with such proportions of text as to render them instructive, as well as amusing, to the lower classes of the people, and to entitle them to the appellation of Books (for the honor of having advanced this second step towards the invention of typography appears to belong exclusively to them), it is impossible to determine. But we cannot, I think, place the commencement of that practice later than the year 1420 ;* and it is very probable that, in some parts, it was used earlier.

* Mr. Dibdin has kindly permitted me to extract the following note from his splendid and interesting work, the "BIBLIOTHECA SPENCERIANA :" vol. i. p. iv.

"Mr. HORN, a gentleman long and well "known for his familiar acquaintance with "ancient books printed abroad, was in pos- "session of a copy of the BIBLIA PAUPE-

Almost all writers * agree, that, in the sequel, it gave rise to the idea of printing with moveable characters, and to the consequent discovery of typography. Now, although we were to refuse credit to the account of Lawrence Coster; and although the expressions in the well known process of 1439,† between Guttenberg and his associates, at Strasburg, are not so clear as to leave *no* doubt whether they refer to block-printing or to printing with moveable characters,—still we can hardly place the first attempts of Guttenberg to print with moveable characters later than the year 1440;‡ and it

" RUM, of the ARS MORIENDI, and of the " APOCALYPSE, all bound in one volume; " which volume had, upon the exterior of the " cover, the following words, stamped at the " extremity of the binding, towards the edge " of the squares: 'HIC LIBER RELEGATUS " 'FUIT PER PLEBANUM—ECCLESIE— " 'ANNO DOMINI 142 (8).' Mr. HORN, " having broken up the volume and parted " with the contents, was enabled to supply " me with the foregoing information upon " the strength of his memory alone: but he " is *quite confident* of the three following " particulars:—1. That the works, contained " in this volume, were as have been just men- " tioned: 2. That the binding was the ancient " legitimate one; and that the treatises had " *not* been *subsequently* introduced into it: " and, 3. That the date was 142 odd—but " positively anterior to the year 1430."

The cautious manner in which the above testimony is given by Mr. Horn, his *certainty* as to the first three figures of the date, his *uncertainty* as to the fourth, joined to the known respectability of that gentleman's character, all combine to stamp it with the undoubted marks of authenticity. It is to be regretted that we are left in ignorance as to the specific editions of the three block-books in question, which were enclosed in this ancient binding.

* All, indeed, that I know of, except Meerman.

† If we may rely upon the correctness of the Latin translation of this document, there can be little doubt that it refers to printing, and to printing with a press; but whether to printing with moveable characters, or to block-printing, appears less certain. Mr. Douce is of the latter opinion—or rather, he considers the evidence so obscure as to admit of a doubt whether it refers to printing at all. *Lambinet*, " Origine de l'Imprimerie," tom. i. p. 20, speaking of Schœpflin's first publication of this process, cautiously observes: " Il prouve par ces titres, *ou plutôt par le sens qu'il leur donne*, que Guttenberg fit à Strasbourg les premiers essais de son art, par des caractères mobiles de bois, et qu'il parvint à y imprimer avec des charactères métalliques."

‡ It is probable that the art of printing with moveable characters was brought to perfection in 1450, and perhaps even earlier. The first Bible printed by Guttenberg (and it must have been some years in preparation), was certainly published between 1450 and 1455. This is proved by the memorandum of

is surely not too much to ascribe to the commencement of block-printing a priority of at least twenty years; more especially if the great extent of Germany be considered, the consequent probability that the earliest block-books might have been printed in parts very remote from those in which typography was first thought of, and the little likelihood that such productions, which were chiefly intended for the less opulent classes of society, should have found their way to distant cities for some time.

However this may be, it is certain that, for many years after the invention of typography, the engravers in wood continued to publish their block-books; in doing which, they no doubt found their account, as no expensive apparatus was required in that mode of printing, and as their blocks being once engraved, they could at any time take off as few, or as many copies of their works, as they chose, or had an immediate demand for.*

From the time that wood engraving became connected with the manufacture of books, we may date its more general diffusion and improvement; and thus the art of printing, which owed its origin to xylography, became at length its greatest support. Moreover, from this period the productions of the wood engraver, collected in the form of volumes, became less exposed to loss or injury; and, consequently, many of them are preserved to our time.

In this view of the subject, it might appear proper that I should here say something concerning the invention of typography; nor should I shrink from the task, could I flatter myself with the hope

an illuminator, or binder, of the name of Cremer, with the date 1456, upon a copy of this rare book preserved at Paris. A fac-simile of this memorandum is given by Mr. Dibdin, in the eighth number of Valpy's *Classical Journal*—together with a copious disquisition upon the Bible itself.

Of the perfection of this magnificent specimen of early typography (and it is probably the first work *of magnitude* printed with moveable characters), those who have not seen it will scarcely form an adequate idea. Mr. Dibdin, in the first volume of his "*Bibliotheca Spenceriana*," has given a well executed *fac-simile* of the type with which it is printed, to which I refer the reader.

* HEINEKEN, "*Idée Générale*," &c. p. 285. Two editions of the "*Biblia Pauperum*," which will be noticed in a subsequent page of this chapter, bear the dates 1470 and 1475.

of discovering the truth, amidst the chaos of contradictory testimony and discordant opinion with which that important question is enveloped. The origin of many useful arts is involved in doubt and obscurity; and of this art, more especially, it may be said, that the great number of controversial volumes which have been, and still continue to be, written, by men of research, for the purpose of illustrating its origin, is a sufficient argument to deter any one, whose studies, like my own, have not been particularly directed to the subject, from venturing upon its discussion.

But although, for the above reasons, I shall avoid, as far as possible, taking part in this controversy, I shall reserve to myself the liberty of offering such occasional remarks upon the subject, as, in the course of my inquiry respecting engraving, may be suggested by the evidence before me; especially when such evidence appears likely to elucidate obscure or misrepresented facts, or to expose the fallacy of unwarranted conclusions.

The authors of the wood-cuts, which constitute what are termed the old block-books, are all of them unknown: the epochs and the schools, even, to which most of them belong, still remain to be ascertained.

If we could trust Heineken, the last of these points would be soon settled: every thing, he tells us, originated in Germany. With that patriotic writer, the circumstance of playing-cards having been known about 1376, in France, is a sufficient proof that they were known previously in Germany.* "Nay, our total ignorance "respecting the first engravers in wood is also a great argument "for Germany. For if that art had been invented in any other "country," says he, "the ancient writers of that country would not "have failed to record it."† As if the same argument might not with equal force be urged against Germany by the writers of any

* "Idée Générale," p. 241. "L'Origine "des Cartes à jouer est assez prouvée par ces "circonstances, et *il s'ensuit qu'elles ont été "en usage en Alemagne avant* 1376, *parce "qu'on les connoissoit, vers ce tems, en "France.*"

† *Idem*, p. 285.

other country; since the old German authors preserve the same profound silence respecting the invention of wood engraving as do those of other European nations.

That, which proof cannot be found to establish, is to be supported by assertion. "Although," continues he, "it is very indifferent, as "regards the art itself, to know who was the first engraver, it is not "indifferent to the curious to be informed at least in what country "they must look for the commencement of engraving; and I am "fully convinced that those who search for it out of Germany will "lose their labour." *

We learn in another part of his book that the central parts of Germany have his preference. Speaking of engraving in copper (and it is evident, from the general tenor of his discourse, that he wishes to inculcate similar doctrine respecting the origin of engraving in wood), he says, he is persuaded that the first inventors of the art resided either at Culmbach, at Nuremberg, or at Augsburg.†

The Dutch writers, on the other hand, with Meerman‡ at their head, are of opinion that wood engraving was invented in Holland; and that the chief part of the early block-books were printed, if not engraved, by their hero Coster, a personage who, it is as confidently asserted by the adverse party, never had existence.

It would be no easy task to apportion to the contending parties their respective shares of praise. The pretensions of each have been exaggerated; and, when once more has been asked than is really

* "Idée Générale," pp. 285, 286.

† *Idem*, p. 222.

‡ *Meerman* ascribes the invention of xylography to *Lawrence Coster;* or, as he calls him, *Lawrent Janszoon;* but supposes that he had previously invented the art of printing with moveable characters. The first editions of the "Speculum Humanæ Salvationis," (in Dutch), the "Figuræ typicæ Veteris atque Novi Testamenti," or, "Biblia Pauperum," the "Historia, seu Providentia Virginis Mariae, ex Cantico Canticorum," the "Ars Moriendi," and the "Historia S. Joannis Evangelistæ, ejusque Visiones Apocalypticæ,' were, all of them, according to Meerman, printed by Lawrent Janszoon, or his heirs. See *Jansen*, "De l'Invention de l'Imprimerie," p. 85, et seq.

due, we are naturally inclined to hesitate, before we admit the justice even of those claims which may be well founded. I shall, therefore, in treating of these block-books, equally refuse my assent to the unsupported assertions of Heineken, and to the overstrained hypothesis of Meerman; chusing rather, for my guides, when such can be found, the unsuspected testimony of authors who took no part in the dispute.

A short review of the promulgation and advancement of the arts of design, generally, in that part of the continent of Europe which comprises Germany and the Netherlands, may assist us in forming our conjectures as to the school from which some, at least, of these ancient books of wood engravings were derived.

It is remarkable that we have no account even of the painters who flourished within this vast tract of country previous to the close of the fourteenth century, and that all the earliest among them were natives of the Low Countries.

Descamps, who copies Van Mander, commences his history of Flemish and German art, with Hubert and John Van Eyck, of Maaseyk on the banks of the Meuse: the former was born in 1366 and died in 1426: the latter, who invented oil-painting, was born four years after his brother Hubert, and died in 1441. Roger of Bruges, and Hugues vander Goes, of the same place, are next mentioned. Then follow Albert van Ouwater of Harlem, contemporary, or nearly contemporary of the Van Eycks; Guerard of Harlem, his disciple; and Dirk van Harlem, who was born about 1410 and died 1470; Hans Hemmelinck or Memmilinck of Bruges, one of whose pictures was dated 1479; Guerard vander Meire of Ghent, Jan Mandyn of Harlem, and Volckaert of the same city; Quintin Metzis of Antwerp; Jerom Bosche of Bois-le-Duc, celebrated for his talent in subjects of whimsical and extravagant imagery; and Cornelius Enghelbrechtsen of Leyden, who was born in 1468 and died in 1533.

Nor can Van Mander, although he was himself a Fleming, be accused of any undue partiality to the Low Countries, in thus de-

voting the early part of his work so exclusively to the history of the Dutch and Flemish painters. These were really artists of ability and reputation, whose performances were not only esteemed in Germany and the Low Countries, but also in Italy, whither they found their way in considerable numbers at an early period, and were highly prized. And, in truth, in an account written in the early part of the sixteenth century,* by an anonymous writer, supposed to be a native of Padua, in which are described the works of art then existing at Padua, Cremona, Milan, Pavia, Bergamo, Crema, and Venice, we find frequent and respectful mention of the works of most of the above-named artists of Holland and the Low Countries; whereas, of the painters of Germany we find no mention whatever: except of Albert Durer, and of one Jeronimo Todeschino, concerning whom I can find no information in other writers.

In short, whoever will be at the pains to look over the list of the painters of these countries, with a map of Germany before him, will be presently convinced that all those, whose names have been deemed worthy of remembrance, from the time of the Van Eycks to that of Albert Durer, were, if we except Michel Wolgemut, natives and residents either of Holland or Flanders. The immense tract of country, properly called Germany, had, no doubt, its artists; but they were inferior to those of the Low Countries: insomuch that the German school of painting can hardly be said to have commenced before Albert Durer.†

* *Notizia d'opere di Disegno della prima meta del secolo* xvi. &c. &c. *Scritta da un anonimo di quel tempo. Pubblicata e illustrata da* D. Jacopo Morelli, 8vo. Bassano, 1800. The anonymous author probably wrote above seventy years before the publication of *Van Mander*'s book.

† Descamps, *La Vie des Peintres Flamands, Allemands, et Hollandois*, 8*vo.* 4 *tom. Paris*, 1753. It is indeed true that *Descamps*, following *Van Mander*, only commences with the discovery of oil-painting. There can be little doubt, that Van Mander could have given us an account of some of those painters who lived prior to that invention, had he chosen it, as well Netherlanders as Germans. The names, indeed, of a few, have been preserved in the inscriptions on their pictures: amongst which may be mentioned Thomas de Mutina, or Muttersdorf, in Bohemia; who, it is said, lived at Prague about 1297, and ac-

This may in some degree be accounted for: the difficulties and danger attending long journeys by land in those early times, probably prevented that frequent intercourse between the inhabitants of the central parts of Germany and those of Italy, which was facilitated to the inhabitants of Holland and Flanders, by their numerous sea-ports and their active commerce with the Mediterranean: and hence the Dutch and Flemish artists may have had many opportunities of improvement, which were denied to their less fortunate contemporaries residing in the inland parts of the Continent.

That which has been said respecting the early painters of these countries, will, in a great measure, be found applicable to their first engravers on copper; most of whom appear to have flourished in the Netherlands, or on the western borders of Germany. I speak as well of the few whose names are known, as of others, whose prints are distinguished only by initial letters or monograms; because, in several cases, we have good grounds for conjecturing the places where they resided.

Thus the artist who marked several of his engravings on copper with the initials E·S· and the dates 1466- 1468, we have, I think, reason to believe, resided at Bocholt, or in its vicinity;* because of

cording to *Chretien de Mechel (Catalogue des Tableaux de la Galerie Imperiale de Vienne, Basle,* 1784, 8*vo.*) painted in *oil*; NICOLAS WURMSER of Strasburg, and THEODORIC OF PRAGUE, who flourished 1357, and whose pictures at Vienna are also said to be in oil. Also HANS MUOLTSCHER of Ulm, in Suabia, one of whose altar-pieces in the *Truchsessian* catalogue of pictures (a collection sold in England some years ago) was dated 1436; and JOHANN and IVO STRIGEL, whose names, with the date 1438, and the qualification, *Tribuni in Memminghen* (in Suabia) were inscribed upon another picture in the same collection. As to MECHEL's assertion that the paintings of the three ancient artists first mentioned are in oil, I shall only observe, that I think it most likely that he was deceived. This, however, is not a subject connected with the one under consideration. I shall therefore refer those of my readers, who wish further information concerning these and other *supposed* ancient specimens of oil-painting, to the judicious observations of LANZI (*Storia Pitt. tom* i. *p.* 58. *et seq.*)

* *Mr. Bartsch* conjectures (Peintre Graveur, tom. 6. p. 1.) that he was a Swiss—but I think upon very slight grounds. We have, in fact, no account of any Swiss engraver on copper, of the fifteenth century.

the affinity which his works bear to those of Francis van Bocholt and Israel van Mecken, both of whom resided at Bocholt; added to the circumstance of Israel's having copied several of his engravings. Mr. Bartsch is of opinion that the place from which Israel took his name, is the small town of Meghen or Mecken, (called also, by the inhabitants, Mekenen,) which is situated upon the river Meuse, three leagues above Bois-le-duc, upon the frontiers of the county of Ravenstein.* It is not a great distance from Bocholt, a town in the bishoprick of Munster. Martin Schongaver, the best engraver that these countries produced in the fifteenth century, although descended from a family of Augsburg, is said to have been born at Colmar in Alsace, where he resided, and died in 1499.† It is highly probable that the ancient artist, who marked his engravings with the initials I·M·, I M, or I·M, accompanied by an instrument of a singular form, supposed to have been used in engraving, was a native of Holland; and that the word zwolle generally engraved at the top of his prints, and which some have read ZWOTT, means no other than the town of ZWOLL in Holland, where perhaps he resided.‡ It is certain that his style very much resembles that of some of the Dutch and Flemish painters of the fifteenth century. Besides these, might be mentioned the ancient artist who engraved several of the designs of Jerome Bosche, and who, it is highly probable, lived at Bois-le-duc; and several others

* Peintre Graveur, tom. 6. p. 194.

† Idem, p 104.

‡ An example of two l's joined together in a similar manner by a cross-stroke resembling that used in crossing two t's, is to be observed in one of the inscriptions to the second print of "the block-book of the Canticles," which will be described in a subsequent part of this chapter, where the word "*pelles*" is thus represented pell. The two last letters of the word are, it is true, wanting; and hence this cross-stroke may be no other than the usual mark of abbreviation. But it is also possible that the word ZWOLL with a similar cross-stroke, may be intended as an abbreviation of ZWOLLENSIS—native or inhabitant of Zwoll. I learn from Mr. Dibdin, that the same kind of abbreviation occurs, almost invariably, in the books printed in the Abbey of St. Alban, in the fifteenth century; and that it is also found in the books printed by Ferandus, at Brescia, A. D. 1473-1480.

whose engravings bear so strong a resemblance to those of the above-described artists, as to give us every reason to consider them of the same school.

From all this it is fair to infer that, however the arts of painting and engraving may have been practised throughout Germany, long previous to the commencement of the fifteenth century, the honor of having first contributed to their improvement belongs more especially to the artists of the Low Countries, and others who inhabited the western extremities of Germany. And hence I am strongly of opinion, that those early block-books, whose pretensions to antiquity are not unattended by some claims to our approval of them as works of art, appertain more properly to the ancient schools of Holland and Flanders than to that of Germany: an opinion, indeed, which a comparison of some of the best of them with others, professedly and indisputably executed in Germany, will tend not a little to support.

I know but of three works of the kind that are entitled to this distinction: the "BIBLIA PAUPERUM," or "POOR MAN'S BIBLE," the "HISTORIA SEU PROVIDENTIA VIRGINIS MARIÆ EX CANTICO CANTICORUM;" and the "SPECULUM HUMANÆ SALVATIONIS." As for the "ARS MEMORANDI," the "HISTORIA SANCTI JOHANNIS EVANGELISTÆ, EJUSQUE VISIONES APOCALYPTICÆ," and the "ARS MORIENDI," of which there are so many editions—and all the other block-books which Heineken has so elaborately described—they are evidently of another and very inferior school; and, whether executed in Germany, or in the Low Countries, were probably the rude manufacture of the ordinary card-makers.* I shall, therefore, content myself

* I speak, however, of these rude productions of the early wood engravers *generally*—to say that they are *all* of them absolutely devoid of merit would be going too far. *Mr. Dibdin*, in his "Bibliotheca Spenceriana," has selected from the Apocalypse, a small group of "a lame and a blind beggar led by a dog," which, as he justly observes, is by no means devoid of spirit; and a good figure of "St. Michael:" but still the general character of these books is such as I have stated in the text. The shortness of the figures, and the disproportionate largeness of the heads, evidently prove

with speaking of the three first-mentioned books, more especially as the imperfections of the latter furnish no satisfactory evidence of their precedence in point of antiquity.*

I am aware that some readers will not be a little surprised, that my researches for the purpose of discovering the school to which the best amongst the ancient block-books belong, should have thus led to a conclusion so contrary to the doctrine which Heineken laboured with so much assiduity to establish; especially if they happen to have read La Serna Santander, who, in the first volume of his Dictionnaire Bibliographique, (p. 37) roundly asserts, "that that writer has proved, demonstratively, that all these books with images engraved in wood, were originally engraved and printed in Germany."

The truth is, that Heineken has proved no such thing; and that Santander, whose book is written with great spirit, might, had he chosen to be at the pains, easily have detected the fallacy of many of his arguments. But an unqualified approval of them suited his purpose better; and Heineken's pretended demonstration was used by Santander as a ponderous weapon, with which the more effectually to

them to be the designs of artists of an inferior class. But, whatever may be their pretensions, the reader will the more readily excuse me for limiting myself to the description of the three block-books first mentioned: as, independently of Heineken's works, a detailed account of most of the others, accompanied by fac-similes of some of the prints they contain, will be found in the *Bibliotheca Spenceriana:* Lord Spencer's library being eminently rich in these scarce specimens of the infancy of printing, as it is indeed in every thing rare and curious in the History of Typography.

* An inquiry into the age and school to which these different block-books appertain, if undertaken by a person thoroughly versed in all those minute distinctions, by which the dates and country of ancient manuscripts are ascertained, and well stored with antiquarian knowledge, (particularly in the epochs of the various changes which took place in the dresses of the different classes of the people of Germany and the Netherlands, and the alterations which were made in the construction of armour from the thirteenth to the close of the fifteenth century) would be an interesting work, and might probably throw much light on this obscure subject. The task, however, would not be an easy one; more especially as the books themselves, to which a frequent reference would of course be necessary, are of extreme rarity.

discomfit Meerman, and all other advocates of a system of typographical history which he had undertaken to oppose.

Most, indeed, of the late writers upon bibliography have taken upon trust all that Heineken has said relative to the early block-books. Nor is it surprising that authors, whose subject only led them incidentally to speak of the art of engraving, should have thought themselves safe in relying upon his decisions; since his numerous works are, (most, or all of them, ostensibly) upon the subject of engraving, and evince, it must be admitted, no small share of erudition. It cannot also be denied that his account of the early block-books is rich in interesting details, which had escaped the observation of those who preceded him, and is consequently highly valuable.

But Heineken's knowledge of the arts of design, notwithstanding his fondness for the subject, was not such as to render him, by any means, a sure guide in matters of taste; and he is often captivated with the worst, whilst he passes by, unnoticed, that which merits praise.

Had Lambinet examined the ancient block-books, assisted by any one who had a knowledge of drawing, he would not have said of them: ("Origine de l'Imprimerie," p. 62) "Ils se ressemblent "presque tous. Les figures qui y sont représentées sont grossierement "faites, au simple trait, dans le goût Gothique," &c. He would have learned that, although in "the Gothic taste," they are not, all of them, "rudely executed;" and he would have seen that the figures, in the three works which I am about to describe, are not "in simple outline," but slightly and not inelegantly shaded by hatchings.

But that which most of all is calculated to awaken caution in the reader of Heineken's works, is the excess of his patriotism; in the indulgence of which he awards all honour and all praise to Germany. It is not by scraping together every iota of evidence or argument, that can be brought to favor one side of a question, leaving the other, at the same time, wholly undefended, that we can hope

to discover truth. Of such a method, the result must ever be over-strained hypothesis and unjustified conclusions: conclusions by which, nevertheless, in proportion to the skill of the writer, those will be in danger of being misled who want the patience necessary to investigation, and the acuteness by which semblance is to be distinguished from reality.

Historiae Veteris et Novi Testamenti, seu Biblia Pauperum.

Heineken begins his account of the ancient block-books with which he was acquainted, with the "Biblia Pauperum," or Poor Man's Bible; without, however, warranting its precedence, in point of antiquity, to some of the rest.

This work is no other than a book of forty leaves of a small folio size, printed by means of friction, from the same number of engraved blocks of wood,* on one side of the paper only; in which respect, as well as in the brown tint† apparently unmixed with oil,‡ with which

* It is, however, possible, that two pages may have been engraved on one block, as we shall find was the case with the book of Canticles, under which circumstance the number of blocks would be twenty instead of forty. I am led to suspect this to be the fact, from an observation made by *Lambinet* (tom. i. p. 66) on a copy of the Biblia Pauperum at Basle. Four of the prints in that copy, I. K. L. M. appear to have been taken off from blocks which had been broken and afterwards joined.

† The tint with which some of the ancient block-books are taken off, is more of a grey; and indeed the later editions of one or two of them are printed with common printing-ink and a press; of which kind Lord Spencer's library contains specimens. But these last were certainly published long after the establishment of typography.

‡ The great rarity and increased value of these ancient works of wood engraving, precludes the idea of making experiments, by which to ascertain, more decidedly, whether or not they are really printed with colour unmixed with oil. The general *appearance* of those which I have seen is certainly such as I have described in the text; and, if we can credit Heineken, the fact is beyond a doubt. Speaking of the "*Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*," (*Idée Générale*, p. 441. *note*) he says. "Cette *dé-*
" *trempe*, employée dans nos anciens ouvrages,
" est d'une *composition si foible, qu'une hu-*
" *midité, tant soit peu forte, est capable de*
" *l'emporter*. C'est ce qui *est arrivé à*
" *quelques exemplaires*, quand ils ont été
" longtems enfermés dans les armoires des
" Bibliothéques voutées, ou dans des endroits

the prints are taken off, it resembles most of the other early block-books. These printed pages are placed two by two, facing each other; the second print being opposite to the first, the fourth to the third, and so forth: by these means the blank sides of each two leaves are likewise opposed to each other, and being pasted together, give to the whole the appearance of a book printed in the ordinary way on both sides the paper.

The prints differ a little in size, being from nine inches and a half to ten inches and a quarter in height, by about seven inches and a half in breadth. Each print contains three sacred historical subjects disposed in compartments, side by side, and four half-length figures of prophets and other holy men in niches; two of them above and two beneath the central subject; in the manner represented in the subjoined sketch:

" rien moins que secs. *Je sais par expé-* " *rience qu'une liqueur un peu forte, enléve* " *entièrement cette encre, quoique l'em-* " *preinte y reste.* Il y en a qui croyent que " cette détrempe a empêché les premiers " imprimeurs d'imprimer ces ouvrages des " deux côtés. Mais, c'est plûtôt parceque " l'impression est faite avec le frottoir, " comme l'on s'en apperçoit évidemment " par l'empreinte, qui est bien forte, et qui " laisse voir le dessein sur le papier, même " quand l'encre est effacée: par cette raison " on a été empêché d'imprimer encore des " vignettes au revers."

The inscriptions, which are written in the Latin language, with rhythmical terminations, commence at the top of each print, in the vacancies on either side the two half figures in niches, by the texts of the Bible from which the subjects are taken. The prophets and saints have underneath them their names; and additional inscriptions, relative to the stories represented, are introduced on labels and in other spaces below.

The central compartments represent the history of the New Testament; those on either side, stories from the Old Testament, typical of, or alluding to, the central subjects.

Thus, on one side "the Annunciation," in the first print, "the Temptation of Eve" is represented; and, on the other, "Gideon with the Fleece." Upon a scroll above, on the left, over the Temptation of Eve, is this inscription: "Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium;" and below, "vipera vim perdit, sine vi pariente puella:" lower down, upon another scroll, are these words: "porta hec clausa erit et non aperietur." On the other side, in like manner, over the Gideon, is this inscription: "descendit dominus sicut pluvia in vellus:" lower down; "rore madet vellus pluviam sicut arida tellus;" and, at the bottom, the title of the principal subject; "virgo salutatur innupta manens gravidatur."

Each print, to guide the bookbinder in placing it, is marked witha letter of the alphabet, immediately over the central subject. The first twenty prints are marked from 𝔄 to 𝔘; after which a second alphabet commences, for the last twenty prints, the letters of which are distinguished from those of the former, by being placed between two points, thus: .𝔞.

The marks which distinguish the various editions of this work will be noticed hereafter: meanwhile I must observe, that the copy before me (Lord Spencer's) is of that edition which Heineken terms "the second," but which I am inclined to think earlier than that which he places as "the first."

In the following catalogue the reader will find a fac-simile of the letter by which each print is distinguished, and a specification of

the three subjects it represents, with the verses accompanying them.* A few specimens of the cuts are also copied, that those who have not an opportunity of seeing the original work, may be, in some degree, enabled to judge of the style and abilities of the ancient artist by whom it was executed.

No. 1. A

Eve tempted by the Serpent. *The Annunciation.* *Gideon and the Fleece.*

Vipera vim perdit
Sine vi pariente puella.

Rore madet vellus
Pluviam sicut arida tellus.

Virgo salutatur innupta manens gravidatur.

The figure of the Virgin in the compartment representing "the Annunciation" has considerable merit. The composition is also in other respects remarkable; the artist having introduced the body of the infant Christ descending amidst the rays which proceed from God the Father; according to the doctrine of Valentine, a heretic of the second century: that, "Christum corpus de cœlo attulisse, et per Mariam tanquam per tubum, et fistulam transiisse." Zani remarks, that several other ancient masters have fallen into the same error, and especially Italians.† Perhaps, indeed, the reason for the original introduction of the group of Eve tempted by the Serpent, as typical of the incarnation of Christ, may be traced to the heresy of the sect of the Ophites, a branch of the Valentinian sect, who imagined that the serpent by which our first parents were deceived, might have been Christ himself.‡

A copy of the whole of this first leaf of the Biblia Pauperum, is

* Or rather some of the verses—in which I have followed Heineken.

† *Materiali*, &c. p. 110. See, also, *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. p. 230. (Edinburgh, 1803.)

‡ Mosheim, vol. i. p. 234.

given by Schelhorn (Amoenit. tom. iv. p. 296). The reader is here presented with a faithful representation of the central subject.

2. b

Moses and the Burning Bush.

Lucet et ignescit
Sed non rubus igne calescit.

The Nativity.

Absque dolore paris virgo Maria maris.

Aaron's Rod producing a Flower.

Hic contra morem
Producit virgula florem.

The middle compartment of this leaf is also prettily composed, and

has, moreover, some novelty to recommend it. The infant is, *bona fide*, placed in the manger.

3. C

Abner visiting David at Hebron. | *The Adoration of the Magi.* | *The Queen of Sheba's Visit to Solomon.*

Plebs notat hec gentes
Christi jungi cupientes.

Hec typate gentem
Notat ad Christum venientem.

Christus adoratur aurum thus mirra locatur.

4. ð

The Presentation of the First-born in the Temple.

The Purification.

The Mother of Samuel dedicating her Son to the Service of the Temple.

Hec presentatur
Partus prior ut redimatur.

Oblatum Christum
Samuel te denotat istum.

Virgo libans Christum Simeonis recipis istum.

5. e

Rebecca sending her Son Jacob to Laban.

The Flight into Egypt.

Micholassisting David to descend from the Window.

Liquit tecta patris
Jacob formidine fratris.

Par Mycol Davit
Saul insidias sibi cavit.

Herodis diram Christus puer effugit iram.

6. F

The Adoration of the Golden Calf.

The Sojourn of the Holy Family in Egypt, and the Destruction of the Idols.

Dagon falling to the Ground before the Ark.

Per Moysen sacrum
Teritur vituli simulacrum.

Archa repentine
Fit Dagon causa ruine.

Ydola presente Christo cecidere repente.

7. S

Saul causing Abimelech and all the Priests to be beheaded.

The Murder of the Innocents.

The Prediction of the Death of the Sons of Eli.

Saul propter Davit
Christos domini vere stravit.

Uno sublato
Stirps est data regia furto.

Isti pro Christo mundo tolluntur ab isto.

The composition on the right, in this leaf, although by no means excellent as a whole, contains a figure of a woman with an infant

in her arms, which possesses great beauty. It is here copied, together with the figure of an old man, extracted from the left-hand compartment of the leaf described under No. 16. Both these figures bear testimony to the artist's talents in drapery. At the same time, I must caution the reader that they are to be deemed selections, rather than fair samples of his general abilities; since, in groups of several figures, he is not often equally successful.

8. h

David consulting God respecting his Return after the Death of Saul.

The Return of the Holy Family from Egypt.

The Return of Jacob to his own Country.

Ad patriam Davit
Defuncto Saul remeavit.

Formidat fratrem
Jacob ardet visere patrem.

Ad loca sancta redit Ihesus egiptoque recedit.

9. ז

The Passage of the Red Sea. | *John baptizing Christ.* | *The Two Spies bearing the Bunch of Grapes.*

Hostes merguntur
Per maris iter gradiuntur.

Flumen transitur
Et patria mellis aditur.

Dum baptisatur Christus baptisma sacratur.

10. ח

Esau selling his Birth-right. | *Christ tempted in the Wilderness.* | *Adam and Eve seduced by the Serpent.*

Lentis ob ardorem
Proprium male perdit honorem.

Serpens vicit Adam
Vetitam sibi sumeret escam.

Christum temptavit satanas ut eum superarat.

11. ט

The Dead Body of the Widow's Son before Elijah. | *The Resurrection of Lazarus.* | *The Widow's Son restored to Life by Elijah.*

Est vidue natus
Per helyam vivificatus.

Per tua dona deus
Vitam dedit huic heliseus.

Per te fit christe redivivus Lazarus iste.

12. י

Abraham and the Three Angels. | *The Transfiguration.* | *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the Fiery Furnace.*

Tres comtemplatur
Abraham solus veneratur.

Panditur en isti
Gentili gloria Christi.

Ecce dei natum cernunt tres glorificatum.

13. כ

Nathan reproving David. | *Mary Magdalen at the Feet of Jesus, in the House of the Pharisee.* | *Miriam, the Sister of Aaron, punished with Leprosy.*

Voce natan tactus
Rex pravos corrigit actus.

Hec lepre tacta
Pena fit munda reacta.

Hanc a peccatis absolvit fons bonitatis.

14. ס

David, with the Head of Goliah. | *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.* | *The Children of the Prophets coming to meet Elijah.*

Hostem qui stravit
Laudatur carmine Davit.

Gloria nate Dei
Tibi convenit hec helysei.

Carmen hebreorum te laudet criste bonorum.

15. ע

Darius requested by Esdras to build the Temple. | *Christ driving the Money-lenders out of the Temple.* | *Judas Maccabeus giving orders for the Purification of the Temple.*

Templum mundari
Jubet hic et festa vocari.

Et tua sancta deus
Mundare studet Machabeus.

Christus vendentes templo repellit ementes.

16. פ

Joseph sent by his Father unto his Brethren. | *Judas Iscariot proposing to the High Priest to betray Christ.* | *Absalom encouraging the People to rebel against his Father.*

Turba malignatur
Fratrum puer nominatur.

Nititur in fata
Patris proles scelerata.

In mortem Christi conspirant insimul isti.

17. צ

Joseph sold to the Ishmaelites. | *Judas receiving the Thirty Pieces of Silver.* | *Joseph sold to Potiphar.*

Te signat Christe
Nummis venundatur iste

Convenit hoc Christo
Quidquid puero fit in isto.

Qui cristum vendis Judas ad tartara tendis.

18. ק

Melchisedec meeting Abram. | *The Last Supper.* | *The Manna falling from Heaven.*

Sacra notant Christi
Que Melchisedech dedit isti.

Se tenet in manibus
Se cibat ipse cibus.

Rex sedet in cena turba cinctus duodena.

19. 𝔱

Micaiah prophesying the Death of Ahab.

Christ, after having washed his Disciples' Feet, about to go to the Mount of Olives.

The Groom of King Joram crushed to Death in the Gate.

Mycheam cedunt
Prophete qui male credunt.

Premitur a popolo
Non credens hic helyseo.

Gethsemane transit Ihesus inde suis valedicet.

20. 𝔲

The Five Foolish Virgins with their Lamps extinguished.

Christ in the Garden—the Soldiers sent to take him having fallen to the Ground.

The Fall of the Angels.

Virginibus fatuis
Aufertur spes data gnaris.

Serpens antiquus
Cecidit de sede repulsus.

Sunt sic prostrati cristum captare parati.

21. .𝔞.

Abner treacherously killed by Joab.

Judas betraying Christ with a Kiss.

Tryphon's treacherous manner of taking Jonathan captive.

Alloquitur blande
Joab hunc perimitque nephande.

Verba gerens blanda
Parat arma tryphonque nephanda.

Per pacem Christe tradit hys te proditor iste.

22. .𝔟.

Jezebel endeavouring to compass the Death of Elijah.

Pilate washing his Hands.

Daniel accused by the Babylonians.

Femina trux istum
Dampnat sic impia cristum.

Gens hec crudelis
Facit in mortem danielis.

Et fera plebs ausa dampnare Ihesum sine causa.

23. .C.

Ham uncovering the Nakedness of his Father Noah.

Christ crowned with Thorns.

The Children mocking the Prophet Elijah.

Nuda verenda videt
Patris dum cham male ridit.

Percutit ira dei
Derisores helysei.

Pro nobis criste probrum pateris pie triste.

24. .D.

Isaac carrying the Wood for his own Sacrifice.

Christ bearing the Cross.

The Widow of Sarepta holding Two Pieces of Wood in the form of a Cross.

Ligna ferens criste
Te presignat puer iste.

Mistica sunt signa
Crucis hec vidue duo ligna.

Fert crucis hoc lignum cristus reputans sibi dignum.

25. .E.

The Sacrifice of Abraham.

Christ on the Cross, with the Madonna fainting.

The Brazen Serpent.

Signatum christum
Puerum pater immolat istum.

Icti curantur
Serpentem dum speculantur.

Eruit a tristi baratro nos passio Christi.

26. .F.

The Creation of Eve.

The Crucifixion, and the Soldier with the Spear which pierced our Saviour's Side.

Moses striking the Rock.

Femina prima viri
De costa cepit oriri.

Est sacramentum.
Christi dans petra fluentem.

De Cristo munda cum sanguine profluit unda.

27. .S.

Joseph let down into the Well. | *The Entombment of Christ.* | *Jonah cast into the Sea.*

Hanc in cysternam
Detruditur iste veternam.

Jonas glutitur
Tamen illesus reperitur.

Mirra conditur et ab hys christus sepelitur.

28. .h.

David cutting off the Head of Goliah. | *Christ's Descent to Limbo.* | *Sampson killing the Lion.*

Signans te christe
Golyam conterit iste.

Ut vis sampsonis
Destruxit ora leonis.

Fit cristi morte baratri destructio porte.

29. .i.

Sampson carrying off the Gates of Gaza. | *The Resurrection of our Saviour.* | *Jonah vomited up from the Whale's Belly.*

Obsessus turbis
Sampson valvas tulit urbis.

De tumulo criste
Surgens te denotat iste.

Quem saxum texit frangens tumulum ihesus exit.

30. .k.

Ruben searching for his Brother in the Well. | *The Three Maries and the Angel at the Sepulchre.* | *The Daughter of Sion seeking for her Spouse.*

Ruben sublatum
Puerum timet esse necatum.

Hec pia vota gerit
Dum sponsum sedula querit.

Quod vivas criste certum docet angelus iste.

31. .l.

The King of Babylon giving orders to release Daniel from the Den of Lions. | *Christ appearing to Mary Magdalen in the Garden.* | *The Daughter of Sion discovering her Spouse.*

Rex jocundatur
Hunc ut vivum speculatur.

Sponso quesito
Fruitur jam sponsa cupito.

Te monstrans piam solaris criste mariam.

32. .m.

Joseph discovering himself to his Brethren. | *Christ appearing to his Disciples.* | *The Return of the Prodigal Son.*

Quos vexit pridem — Flens amplexatur
Blanditur fratribus idem. — Natum pater ac recreatur.
His ihesus apparet surgentis gloria claret.

33. n

The Angel appearing to Gideon. | *The Incredulity of St. Thomas.* | *Jacob wrestling with the Angel.*

Angelus hortatur — Ihsrael est dictus
Ne quid gedeon vereatur. — Luctans Jacob benedictus.
Te pateris christe palpari se dat ut iste.

34. o

Enoch taken up into Heaven. | *The Ascension.* | *Elijah received up into Heaven.*

Enoch translatus — Celitus effectus
Celestibus est sociatus. — Helia per aëra vectus.
Sanctus sanctorum christus petit astra polorum.

35. .p.

Moses receiving the Tables of the Law. | *The Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles.* | *Elijah's Sacrifice consumed by Fire from Heaven.*

Est lex divina — Celica flamma venit
Moysi data vertice Syna. — Et plebis pectora lenit.
Pectora verorum replet almum pneuma virorum.

The subject in the centre is by no means inelegantly composed. It is copied in the "Bibliotheca Spenceriana," vol. i. p. xxvii.

36. .q.

Solomon causing his Mother to sit by his side. | *The Coronation of the Virgin.* | *Hester and Ahasuerus.*

Ingressam Matrem — Hester ut ingreditur
Salomon sibi collocat istam. — Et assuuerum veneratur.
Assumendo piam venerate criste mariam.

37. ר.

The Judgment of Solomon. *The Last Judgment.* *The Amalekite, who slew Saul, killed by the order of David.*

Dicat nunc juste
Dandus matri puer iste.
Ob domini cristum
Sic David judicat istum.
Judicio damnandos reprobos simul atque nephandos.

38. ך

The Destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. *Hell.* *Sodom destroyed by Fire from Heaven.*

Hi terre dantur
Quia cristo non famulantur.
Ob crimen vite
Traduntur sic Sodomite.
Sic affliguntur penis qui prava sequuntur.

Mr. Dibdin has also inserted a fac-simile of the middle subject of this leaf at p. xxviii. of the work above mentioned. It is worthy of remark that the subject is treated in a manner very similar to one of the alto-rêlievos of Niccola or Giovanni Pisano on the façade of the Duomo at Orvieto, executed about 1300.

39. .ף.

The Feast of the Children of Job. *Christ bearing the Souls of the blessed in his Mantle.* *Jacob's Vision of the Ladder.*

Job nati gaudent
Quia sic feliciter audent.
Angelus est visus
Jacob in hoc valde gavisus.
O! pater in celis me tecum pascere velis.

The front figure of Christ, in the compartment in the centre, has a considerable share of grandeur. It is introduced, p. xxix., in Mr. Dibdin's work. The design of "Jacob's Vision of the Ladder"

is one of the most agreeable in the book, and is here copied.

40. ,V.

The Daughter of Sion crowned by her Spouse. *The Reward of the Righteous. Christ is about to place a Crown upon the Head of a Person who is kneeling before him.* *St. John listening to the converse of an Angel.*

Laus anime vere
Sponsum bene sensit habere.
Sponsus amat sponsam
Christus nimis et speciosam.
Tunc gaudent anime sibi quando bonum datur omne.

This last leaf is copied entire in Heineken, "Idée Générale," p. 393. The two figures of St. John and the Angel are remarkable for their sober dignity of style, and I therefore close my selections from the "Biblia Pauperum" with this specimen; the upper part of which will also be found copied in the "Bibliotheca Spenceriana."

Of this work, in forty pieces, with the text in the Latin language, Heineken describes four different editions, besides another, augmented by ten prints, which he terms the fifth edition. He declares himself, however, unable to determine which is the earliest. "If,"

says he, " I place them one after the other, it is only to explain " the difference between them; for I must candidly confess, that I " neither know which is the original, nor the epoch of either of the " five. The engravers have copied each other with such exact- " ness in preparing these editions" (he speaks here of the four first editions with forty prints), " that there is very little difference be- " tween one and the other: but there is some; and those who " examine them carefully, stroke by stroke, will find several small " variations; although the design, and the manner of engraving, are " the same." Heineken then points out certain marks by which these different editions are to be distinguished.

" The edition," says he, " which I call the first, is that where " upon the twenty-first print marked .a. the triangular space, over " the two pillars that divide the central subject from the two lateral " ones, is ornamented with a sort of star, thus:

" whereas in all the other editions the space has this ornament:

" The first edition moreover differs from the others in another " respect; the letters n o r c of the second alphabet (num- " bers 33. 34. 37. and 38.) have no points on each side of them, " whereas in what I term the second and third editions they " have points."

" The second edition," continues Heineken, " I consider that " wherein the ornament between the two niches, at the top, in " the print marked .h. (No. 28) is thus:

" and where, in the print .p. (35) the tiara of Moses has two " horns at the top of it—in this manner:"

whereas, in the third edition, as he afterwards tells us, " this tiara, or " cap of Moses, has only a small button on the top of it, thus:

" The *fourth* edition," continues Heineken, " is more easily dis- " tinguished; the prints not being marked, like the others, with the " letters of the alphabet. Perhaps it may be the most ancient. " Who knows whether or not the copyist may have added " these letters afterwards, to guide the printer in arranging the " sheets?"

I should not have been thus minute in detailing the marks by which Heineken distinguishes the various editions of this book, were it not that Lord Spencer's copy, now before me, led me, upon my first examination of it, to suspect some error in the German writer: I mean independent of an error in the press, by which .a. is termed No. 22 instead of No. 21. Nor could I account for it by the supposition that this copy had been made up out of two incomplete copies of different editions; since the paper is evidently of the same quality; the tint with which the prints are taken off is the same; and there is nothing whatever to indicate that the book has at any time undergone alteration.

Lord Spencer's copy wants the points on each side of the letters n o r c of the second alphabet; and in that respect corresponds with Heineken's description of the *first* edition; whilst in all other particulars it answers the description given by him of the *second*. I find, however, that Heineken is correct in the description given by him of the edition which he terms the *first;* having lately had an opportunity of examining the copy of the Biblia Pauperum, preserved in the Bodleian Library, which is of that edition: but he errs in asserting that the want of those points, on each side of the said letters, is a distinction exclusively belonging to that edition; since the edition which he calls the *second* is likewise without them.

I have already stated my belief that the edition which Heineken places first (I say places first, because he confesses his inability to

decide which, amongst all the editions he describes, is really the original) is less ancient than that which he terms the second.

In Lord Spencer's copy, the paper, and the tint with which it is printed, bear evidence of higher antiquity than the tint and paper in the edition at the Bodleian Library. The figures likewise are marked with greater intelligence, and have more spirit and expression: they appear moreover to have been engraved with greater diligence; although upon a sort of wood which was less calculated for the purpose of engraving * than that used for the other; all of them, I think, indications of its priority.

Still I must acknowledge with Heineken, that the prints in these two editions (for I have not had an opportunity of seeing the others) so nearly resemble each other, that it is no easy matter for a common observer to distinguish the difference between them, except upon a careful comparison, much less to decide as to their respective pretensions to originality.†

* The impressions in Lord Spencer's copy, at least in many instances, have a sort of horizontally striped and confused appearance, which leads me to suppose that they were taken from engravings executed on some kind of wood of a coarse grain.

† I had not an opportunity of *comparing* these two copies together: but I examined the one only two days after I had carefully examined the other. The memorandums which I made relative to the *Bodleian* copy, on the spot, are as follow:

Biblia Pauperum—first edition, according to Heineken—complete—forty prints. The prints, however, coloured, and recently pasted down upon broad margin, like an ordinary book of prints. One of the colours with which it is tinted is verdigrease, which has become opaque, and thereby rendered the strokes of the engraving, in those parts, very difficult to distinguish. Another of the colours which frequently occurs is a sort of madder lake, shining, and apparently of the same quality as that used on the *St. Bridget*, though it is not laid on quite so thick.

The impressions in this copy have not that striped confused appearance that those in Lord Spencer's copy have; the letters are more easy to read, and the tint with which they are printed is of a greyer hue. The paper is of a lighter tint. The blocks appear to have been executed with less care, and in a ruder and less finished manner, than those of Lord Spencer's edition, though still the hands are often well indicated. Upon the whole I am very much inclined to think Lord Spencer's the earliest. Besides the copy of the *Biblia Pauperum*, which *Heineken* (Idée Générale, 322), upon the authority of *Meerman*, mentions in the Bodleian Library, he refers to another in the Library of Corpus Christi College at Oxford. This is an error. No copy of the work exists in that collection.

The four first editions, according to Heineken, are correct copies of each other.

The *fifth* edition differs from them all; not only in the number of the prints, which is increased to fifty, but, also in the compositions of the subjects, which, judging from a fac-simile given by Heineken of the last print, were designed by an artist of a very different and inferior school; and are in a style not very unlike the more Gothic productions of Israel Van Meck. They are engraved, however, with great neatness of execution, and the characters of the inscription are better formed, and cut with more precision, than those of the former editions. I should judge this edition to be considerably more recent than that from which I have made selections. It nevertheless appears to be of extreme rarity, since Heineken knew but of one copy of it, which was preserved in the library of the convent of Wolfenbuttel.

I shall briefly mention the subjects by which this edition is augmented, the verses accompanying them, the distinguishing letter upon each, and the number of the leaf.*

1. 𝔄

Jesse, from whose Body rises the Genealogical Tree of Christ.

Sic de radice
Processit virgula yesse.

The Birth of the Virgin.

Balaam and his Ass, with the Angel.

Ex jacob ista
Processit stellula clara.

Sicut spina rosam genuit.

2. 𝔅

The Marriage of Tobit and Sarah.

Fit tobie sara
Nutu dei copulata.

The Marriage of the Virgin.

The Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca.

Ut impleantur
Promissa sic copulantur

Est desponsata Joseph hec virgo beata.

* The reader will observe that these letters are of a very *different form* from those in the edition already described.

No. 3. contains the same subjects as No. 1. in the preceding editions.

4. D

Moses visited by Jethro. — *The Visitation of Elizabeth.* — *The Levite visiting his Father-in-law.*

Hic consobrinum
Letanter suscipit illum.

Hic gratulatur
Dum a socera visitatur.

Hec neptem visitat infans gaudendo insultat.

No. 5. contains the same subjects as No. 2. in the foregoing editions.

6. F

The Circumcision of Abraham. — *The Circumcision of Christ.* — *The Circumcision of Isaac.*

Circumcisus Abram
Figuram denotat istam.

Hic precepto tuo
Parat deus vulnere scisso.

Observando legem Ihesus patitur lesionem.

Nos. 7. to 17. inclusive, contain the same subjects as Nos. 3. to 13. in the preceding editions.

18. S

Isaiah weeping for Jerusalem. — *Christ weeping for Jerusalem* — *The Lamentation of Jeremiah.*

Hic mala futura
Deplorat maxima cura.

Flet jeremias
Fundendo guttulas pias.

Christus deplorat locum gemitibus.

Nos. 19. to 26. inclusive—Same subjects as Nos. 14. to 21. in the preceding editions. No. 27. same as No. 23. in the foregoing editions.

28. C.

Lamech tormented by his Two Wives. — *The Scourging of Christ.* — *Job afflicted by Satan in the presence of his Wife.*

Illusus iste
Te figurat Ihesum Christe.

Christum judei,
Job ledunt crimine rei.

Pelle thum plagas pro nobis sufferens istas

29. ס.

A Concubine taking the Crown from the Head of a King.

Christ crowned with Thorns.

Schimei insulting David.

Stultus est vere
Qui spem ponit in muliere.

Spernit hic regem
Verbis factis sufferentem.

Pro corona nobis celestia dona.

Nos. 30. and 31. contain the same subjects as Nos. 22. and 24. in the preceding editions.

32. ע.

Lamech, Tubal Cain, and an Assistant, forging Nails.

Christ nailed to the Cross.

The Prophet Isaiah sawed in two.

Isti nunc parant
Quibus christum crucifigant.

Serra divisus
Fuit hic in arbore clusus.

Heu sic confixus sit pius et benedictus.

Nos. 33. 34.—Same subjects as Nos. 25. 26. in the preceding editions.

35. פ.

Joshua causing the Body of the King of Ai to be taken down from the Cross. Joshua, ch. viii.

Christ taken down from the Cross.

The Bodies of the Seven Sons of Saul taken down from the Crosses, to which they had been affixed.—II. Book of Kings (viz. II. Book of Samuel), ch. xxi.

Rex cum existit
Corpus deponere dixit.

Clavis confixi
Figura est ihesu christi.

Hic propter festum optat deponere christum.

36. I.

Adam and Eve lamenting the Death of Abel. — *The dead Body of Christ in the Lap of the Virgin.* — *Naomi lamenting the Death of her Sons.*

Deplorant multum
Extinclum puerum istum.
Hec natos plorat
Functos flebiliter orat.
Fasciculum mirre puto dilectum redolere.

Nos. 37. to 50. inclusive, represent the same subjects at Nos. 27. to 40. in the preceding editions.

The inscriptions in the five editions of the "Biblia Pauperum" above described are in Latin. At length, in 1470, an edition was published with the text translated into the German language. This edition, like the four first, contains only forty prints: the designs are by another hand. Heineken has given a copy of the first leaf, in his Idée Générale, p. 323. The composition of the Annunciation, in the centre, is not ungraceful; but the style is more modern than that of the other editions. The engravings, judging from this copy, are executed in a slight manner.

The last print of this edition is marked with the arms of the engraver (as Heineken supposes) and the date, thus:

but notwithstanding these arms, the name of the artist, and even the place where the work was published, remain unknown.

Another German edition of this book, by a different artist, is also mentioned by Heineken: it has only forty prints, the last of which is marked thus:

The last figure is intended, it is supposed, for a 5. The artist who engraved this edition is likewise unknown.

Besides these several editions of the "Biblia Pauperum," printed with wooden blocks, there exist two in which the text is printed in moveable characters; one in the German, the other in the Latin language. They were published from the press of Albrecht Pfister, at Bamberg, about 1462; although they are without date, and are considered the earliest examples of books printed on both sides of the page, with metal types, and decorated with wood-cuts.

Both these editions will be found correctly described in Mr. Dibdin's Catalogue of Lord Spencer's magnificent library. Heineken appears to have seen only one of them,—the German,—and to have been ignorant of the printer's name. Mr. Dibdin has given copies of one or two of the engravings; which, in truth, furnish no very favorable sample of the arts of Franconia, in 1462;* and will, I trust, be admitted as not a little corroborative of the judgment I have given as to the comparative merits of the early schools of art in Germany and the Low Countries.

The original composition of this short abstract of holy writ, illustrated by designs of the chief stories of the Old and New Testament is, it is probable, of great antiquity. Heineken describes a manuscript of it, which he considers of the fourteenth century; and informs us that upon the first leaf of an incomplete copy of the second edition of the Biblia Pauperum, in the royal library at Hanover, some ancient possessor of the book had written thus:

S. ANSGARIUS EST AUTOR HUJUS LIBRI.

"A hand less ancient," continues he, "has added, in the Ger-
"man language, to the following effect: 'This book of devout and

* I can by no means agree with Mr. Dibdin as to the *propriety* of Camus's observation, "that although these cuts are 'encore très-grossières, il y a cependant plus d'intention et d'ensemble que dans les dessins des éditions antérieures.'" The word I am sure escaped him inadvertently, for he justly observes of the cut representing "Elijah car-

" pious images was (probably) first invented, in honour of God " and for the devotion of the laity (the word probably is written by " a more modern hand) by S. Ansgarius, the first bishop of Ham- " burg.' He who wrote the word probably, has added: vid. 'Claudii " Ornhielmi historia, Sveonum Gothorumque ecclesiastica, lib. I. " cap. 21. p. m. 70. item Tenzel, et la vieille Chronique et Histoire " de Zeeland.' Ansgarius, a native of France, and a monk of the " convent of Corbie," continues Heineken, " was sent into lower " Saxony, and towards the North, to convert the Pagans; on which " account he was styled the Apostle of the Northern Nations. In " the year 831, he was created the first Bishop of Hamburg, and " in 844 he was translated to the Bishoprick of Bremen, where he " died in 864."

Heineken saw, " in the cloister of the church termed the Dome " at Bremen, two bassirelievi sculptured in stone, the figures of " which are of a middle size, and line for line the same as those in " the German* edition of the Biblia Pauperum. One of them is " in the first arch of the vault, close to the principal entrance of the " church; and represents, in the middle, the Annunciation; and, " on either side, Eve tempted by the Serpent, and Gideon with the " Fleece. At bottom are the two busts of prophets, and the same " Latin inscription: Legitur in Genesi, &c. in Gothic characters; " and also the same verses:

" Vipera vim perdit
" Sine vi pariente puella.
" Rore madet vellus
" Pluviam sitit arida tellus.
" Virgo salutatur innupta manens gravidatur.

ried up to heaven," that it is singularly *grotesque and ridiculous;* epithets very inapplicable to the prints in the first editions of the *Biblia Pauperum*, which, although in a dry style, were evidently designed by the hand of one who, in his time, merited the appellation of master.

* Of course *Heineken* means the first edition, which, indeed, as well as the others, he ascribes to the school of Germany. The inscriptions accompanying those bassirelievi, were in the Latin language, and, of consequence, he cannot mean to compare them to the engravings in the edition printed with the inscriptions in the German tongue.

" In the eighth arch of the vault is represented, in like manner, " the baptism of Christ; and, on each side of it, Pharaoh drowned " in the Red Sea, and the two Spies carrying the bunch of grapes; " with the same Latin inscriptions. It is probable that the other " arches were anciently ornamented with the rest of these subjects, " which may have been defaced and destroyed in the commo- " tions and revolutions that have befallen Bremen."

Heineken seems to consider it not quite impossible that this sculpture might have been executed under the directions of Ansgarius himself,—that is, in the middle of the ninth century. For my own part, I am very much inclined to doubt the existence of any cloister or church with an arched roof, divided, as this appears to be, by groins, of so high an antiquity, throughout Germany, or, indeed, anywhere else.

Ansgarius, however, might still have been the original author of the " Biblia Pauperum." " The words of Ornhielm," as Heineken observes, " are remarkable.* He says that books were attributed " to Ansgarius, written by *cyphers and images, (per numeros et* " *signa,)* which were called *pigmenta,*—paintings. Perhaps," continues Heineken, " these words occasioned the ancient possessor " of the copy at Hanover, to attribute the book to this bishop."

Such may indeed have been the case: but it is very possible that that person had some further traditional authority for ascribing it to Ansgarius. The bassirelievi in the cloister of Bremen, even supposing them to be not earlier than the thirteenth or fourteenth century, may still be considered as in some degree corroborative of

* These are his words: " Ingenii monumenta aliqua reliquisse videtur, sed quorum nulla posterorum cura ad nos pervenerint. Et quidem quos *per numeros et signa* conscripsisse eum libros Rembertus memorat, indigitatos *pigmentorum* vocabulo, eos continuisse palam est quasdam aut e divinarum litterarum, aut pie doctorum patrum scriptis, pericopas et sententias, ipsi in quotidianum usum delectas excerptasque, ac numeris librorum capitumque enotatas, ut, cum usus requirerit, ad manum essent, excitandae pietati ac resipiscentiae, nec non frequenti meditationi mortis ad extremi illius rigidissimi judicii."

the story; since they might have been executed in honor of the Apostle of the North, and in remembrance of his method of instructing the people in the mysteries of the Christian religion, upon the rebuilding or restoration of the church over which he presided; and were, perhaps, copied from or renewed upon the authority of more ancient sculptures or paintings then in existence, or even from manuscripts ascribed to Ansgarius himself.

But, however ancient the original invention of the work, the age of the several engraved editions of it without date, must still, in a great measure, remain conjectural. The four editions first mentioned appear to have been copied from each other. That from which specimens have been given, is, in my opinion, as before observed, a production of the Low Countries or of Holland; and I am very much inclined to think it of a date not later than 1420;* but I speak with less confidence on this point, as, from the commencement of the fifteenth century until near its close, very little change of style is to be discovered in the designs of the artists of those schools.

Historia seu Providentia Virginis Mariae, ex Cantico Canticorum.

Such is the title given by Heineken to a small folio volume composed of thirty-two subjects taken from the Book of Canticles, and printed, two on each leaf, from engraved wooden blocks, on one side of the paper only. These prints are interspersed with passages of text, engraved in large characters, on scrolls fantastically disposed amongst the figures; a circumstance which gives to the whole work a very singular appearance, and no doubt occasioned Heineken, who was blind to its real merits, to term it "the most Gothic of all the block-books."† Lambinet, however, is incorrect

* See p. 99.

† The impropriety of Heineken's judgment upon this occasion (Idée, &c. p. 374) did not escape the notice of Mr. Dibdin, who

when he says that " some of the scrolls proceed from the mouths of the figures." The leaves, like those of the " Biblia Pauperum," are pasted back to back.

Heineken mentions two editions of this book; the first, of course, in his opinion, engraved and published in Germany; the second, copied from it in Holland or Flanders.

Of the former edition, the Count Pertusati, he informs us, possesses a complete copy; that Mr. Verdussen of Antwerp had one similar; and that a third copy is preserved in the Bodleian Library. The Hotel de Ville at Harlem, possesses an incomplete copy of the latter edition; which, according to Meerman (p. 225) was purchased from the heirs or descendants of Laurence Coster. This copy, it appears, has, at the top of the first leaf, the following Flemish or Dutch inscription engraved in wood.

Dit is die vorsinicheit va Marie der mod. godes. en is gehete in lath. *cāti.*

Heineken insists that " this inscription proves that the copy at

justly observes of the work before us (*Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, vol. i. p. xxxvi) " that it " is, upon the whole, very greatly superior to " the generality of books of this description."

The same writer, however, has framed an hypothesis relating to the mode in which the impressions of this curious work were produced, which is not equally well-founded.

He observes (p. xlii) that " after the most " careful examination of this very early and " curious specimen of the graphic art, he " inclines strongly to the opinion that it is " the production of some metallic substance, " and not struck off from wooden blocks."

I do not think it necessary to go into the argument by which Mr. Dibdin endeavours to support his opinion, (formed, like that of Mr. Landseer before noticed, upon the *supposed* inadequacy of wood engraving to produce that sharpness and precision in the strokes, by which the work I am speaking of is distinguished,) because four pages of Lord Spencer's copy, now before me, furnish *undoubted evidence* that the engravings from which the impressions were taken, were executed on blocks of wood. This evidence I shall presently produce—meanwhile, I feel myself obliged to protest against what, upon the same occasion, my friend has advanced, relative to the priority of German over Italian chalcography, and the silly credulity displayed by *Papillon* in his story of the two *Cunio*.

" Harlem is of a later edition, printed after the Latin one."* He adds, " that it is well known that the first printed books have no " titles, and more especially those printed from engraved wooden " blocks." But there is, I think, reason to suspect that the above title (which, from its being in the Flemish or Dutch language, whilst the text of the work itself is in Latin, produces a strange anomaly) is not genuine; and that it is no other than a silly fraud devised by some one of the compatriots of Coster, for the purpose of establishing a fact which it is, in reality, better calculated to overthrow.† Lord Spencer's copy of this book corresponds in every respect with the description of the one at Harlem, except that it has no such title: it is entire, and its margins are in such perfect preservation, as to leave no doubt that it is in the same state in which it was published.

Heineken endeavours to draw another argument in favor of the originality of the edition possessed by Pertusati, Verdussen, and the Bodleian Library, from the various errors, in that edition, in the Latin inscriptions on the scrolls; which, he says, are corrected in the other edition. But it is evident that this circumstance makes in favor of an opposite conclusion. The artist who originally invented the work must have been well acquainted with Latin, since it is, in fact, no other than an union of many of the most beautiful verses of the book of Canticles, with a series of designs illustrative of the divine mysteries supposed to be revealed in that sacred poem; and consequently we have reason to consider that edition the original, in which the inscriptions are given with the most correctness; and to ascribe the gross blunders in the other, to the ignorance of some ordinary wood engraver by whom the work was copied.

* It is not very easy to understand what Heineken means in this passage—The text in both the editions is in Latin. Heineken, it may be proper to observe, has brought no proof whatever that either of the editions was published in Germany.

† Since writing the above, I find that *Scriverius*, in speaking of " the Book of Canticles," mentions the Dutch title. That title is, therefore, not a very recent invention.

But, independent of the inscriptions, in the edition possessed by Lord Spencer, being free from most of the errors found in the other, the figures themselves, in that edition, have every characteristic of originality: they are designed and executed with great care and delicacy; but, at the same time, with so much freedom, intelligence, and masterly decision in every part, as to leave no doubt that they were engraved upon the original designs of an artist of no ordinary abilities in those early times.

The figures in the edition in the Bodleian Library are, it is true, by no means deficient in spirit; but they want much of the clearness and precision so remarkable in the others, and are, moreover, of very unequal merit; some of the heads, for example, having great beauty, whilst others are carelessly executed, and what artists term very much out of drawing. Upon the whole, therefore, after a very careful examination of both the editions, I feel little hesitation in pronouncing that edition the FIRST which Heineken terms the SECOND.

Lambinet, I suspect, is in error, when he tells us that "Gaignat possessed a copy of this book in which the inscriptions were printed in moveable characters;" he is certainly mistaken when he asserts "that in the Bodleian Library to be so." He, however, describes a copy in the imperial library at Paris which, (unless he examined it with the most culpable negligence) must be very different from the two editions above mentioned. "The text," he says, "is "printed on both sides of the leaves, and bears the date 1470: the "figures," he adds, "appear to be more ancient than that epoch."*

Having given my reasons for believing that edition of the block-

* "Origine de l'Imprimerie," tom. i. p. 69. What Lambinet means by the *text* being printed on both sides the paper, unless he intends to infer that the figures are also printed on both sides, I am at a loss to imagine. M. Daunou, in his "Analyse," inserted tom. i. p. 311. of Lambinet's work, after mentioning the two first editions of the "Book of Canticles," (p. 319) says in a note: "L'exemplaire de la bibliothèque na- "tionale est d'une édition postérieure à ces "deux-là; il est daté de 1470. Les feuillets "y sont imprimés des deux côtés."

book under consideration to be the *first*, which Heineken terms the *second*, I now proceed to speak of Lord Spencer's copy, which, as has been said, is of the FIRST edition.

Upon first viewing this work, I was of opinion that each of the designs contained in it was engraved upon a separate block of wood: but, upon a more careful examination, I have discovered that the contents of each two pages,—that is, four subjects,—were engraved on the same block. The number of wooden blocks, therefore, from which the whole was printed, was only eight. This is proved in the first two pages of the copy before me; where, near the bottom of the two upper subjects, the block appears to have been broken in two, in a horizontal direction,—after it was engraved,—and joined together again; although not with such exactness but that the traces of the operation clearly show themselves. The traces of a similar accident are still more apparent in the last block, containing the Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32. The whole work was, therefore, printed on eight sheets of paper from the same number of engraved blocks, the first four subjects being printed from the same block upon the same sheet,—and so on with the rest; and, indeed, in Lord Spencer's copy, each sheet, being mounted upon a guard, distinctly shows itself entire.

I consider this work to be without doubt of the same school as the edition of the "Biblia Pauperum," of which specimens have been given; but somewhat less ancient. The manner of expressing the foliage of the trees by gently curved touches, ranged over each other in a horizontal direction; and of indicating the clumps of herbage by a few strokes placed perpendicularly in the middle, and diverging at each side; is the same in both:—every thing testifies that both are the productions of artists who had gone through the same routine of study, and thereby acquired the same systematic mode of characterizing particular objects.* Nevertheless, there is a lightness and

* There is, I think, indeed, good reason to believe that the "Biblia Pauperum," "the Book of Canticles," and the "Speculum Salvationis," were, in great part, en-

gracefulness in the figures in the book now before us, which distinguish it from all the other block-books I am acquainted with, and proclaim its author the Parmigiano of his school. The characters of the inscriptions, also, are executed with greater neatness and precision than those of the Biblia Pauperum, and the impressions are taken off with a darker brown.

I will not attempt to describe these prints individually; for, as the chief actors in most of them are the same, they of course a good deal resemble one another. I shall satisfy myself with mentioning the number of scrolls on each design; the first words of each inscription, where, with the help of the Vulgate Bible, I am able to make them out; and, to facilitate reference, I shall add the chapter and verse from which each inscription is taken. As I proceed, I shall select a few specimens, which, from the correctness of the artist who copies them, will enable those who have not an opportunity of seeing the original work, to form some idea of its merits.

The reader is, no doubt, aware, that all those passages in the Book of Canticles which we consider typical or prophetic of Christ's love for his Church, are, in the Roman Catholic Church, considered applicable to the Madonna, who, of consequence, is a principal figure in each of the engravings.

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I. 1. This composition is illustrated by two inscriptions on scrolls. The first is as follows: *Osculetur me osculo oris sui: quia meliora sunt ubera tua vino.* (Cant. cap. i. v. 1.) In the edition which Heineken calls the First, the word *vino* is erroneously written *viro*. The second scroll has this inscription: *Veni in ortum* meum soror*

graved by the same wood-engraver, although from the designs of different artists. I shall speak further on this subject when I come to treat of the last mentioned work.

* I have given the orthography, as nearly as I could, as it is in the original. The H, as in the word Hortum, is generally omitted: the letter i is frequently substituted for the y, and the y for the i: the diphthong æ, as in filiæ, is constantly written with the e alone.

Block Design

mea sponsa, messui mirrham meam cum aromatibus meis: (cap. v. v. 1.) In the other edition the word *messui* is written *mesui*n.

2. Two scrolls—on the first: *Caput tuum ut Carmelus: Collum tuum sicut turris eburnea* (cap. vii. v. 4. 5.) The inscription on the second scroll begins thus: *Nigra sum sed formosa, filie Jerusalem, &c.* (cap. i. v. 4.) This leaf is copied on a reduced scale in Heineken (Idée Générale, p. 374.)
3. There are two scrolls also in this print, the first is inscribed: *Trahe me: post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum* (cap. ii. v. 14.) The second: *Sonet vox tua in auribus meis: &c.*
4. This has also two scrolls, the inscriptions on which commence: *En dilectus meus loquitur mihi: Surge, &c.* (cap. ii. v. 10.) and *Quam pulchra es amica mea, &c.* (cap. iv. v. 1.

II. 5. Two scrolls—on the first: *Qualis est dilectus tuus, &c.* (cap. v. v. 9.) The second scroll begins: *Dilectus meus candidus, &c.* (cap. v. v. 10.)
6. There is only one scroll in this composition: the inscription begins: *Adjuro vos filie Jerusalem, per capreas cervosque, &c.*—In the other edition the word *capreas* is written *capitas,* and *cervosque* appears *tervosque.*
7. This composition has two scrolls. The inscription in the first begins: *Erunt verba* (not *ubera* as in the Vulgate) *tua sicut botri vinee, &c.* (cap. vii. v. 8.) The other edition has also the word *verba.* The second inscription begins: *Botrus cipri dilectus meus mihi, &c.* (cap. i. v. 13.)
8. There are three scrolls in this composition. The first words on them are: *Ortus conclusus est, &c.* (cap. iv.

Ego flos cāpi et lyhū cōuallium

Block Design

v. 12.) *Fons ortorum puteus aquarum, &c.* (cap. iv. v. 15.) *Surge, &c.* I am not able to decipher the third inscription.

III. 9. The figures in this composition are less incommoded by the scrolls, than is the case in most of the others; for which reason I have selected it as a specimen by which the reader may be enabled to form some idea of the general style of the work. It might seem unnecessary that I should say any thing concerning the inscriptions on this print, as they are correctly given in the copy: nevertheless, for the convenience of those who are not used to the abbreviations so frequent in the old block-books, the words are here subjoined: *Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi, qui pascitur inter lylia.* (cap. ii. v. 16.) *Ego flos campi, et lylium convallium.* (cap. ii. v. 1.)

10. There are two scrolls in this composition also. *Pulchre sunt gene tue, &c.* (cap. i. v. 9.) *Leva ejus sub capite meo, &c.* (cap. viii. v. 3.)

11. This has also two inscriptions on scrolls; the first commences: *Que habitas in ortis, &c.* (cap. viii. v. 13.) The other, I am not able to decipher.

12. There are no less than seven scrolls, containing the same number of inscriptions, interspersed among the figures in this composition; a circumstance that gives it a very singular appearance, and much diminishes the effect of the figures, which, though of very small dimensions, have a considerable share of beauty. I shall content myself with giving the beginning of two or three of the inscriptions: *Quo abiit dilectus tuus, &c.* (cap. v. v. 17.) *Si Hostium est compingamus illud, &c.*

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(taken from cap. viii. v. 10, but altered.) *Vulnerasti cor meum, &c.* (cap. iv. v. 9.)

IV. 13. Two scrolls: *Descendi in hortum meum, &c.* (cap. vi. v. 10.) *Talis est dilectus meus, &c.* (cap. v. v. 16.)

14. Two scrolls: *Aperi mihi soror mea, &c.* (cap. v. v. 2.) *Pessulum Hostii mei, &c.* (cap. v. v. 6.)

15. Two scrolls: *Indica mihi quem diligit, &c.* (cap. i. v. 6.) *Si ignoras te ô pulchra, &c.* (cap. i. v. 7.)

16. Two scrolls: *Anima mea liquefacta est, &c.* (cap. v. v. 6.) *Statura* (it is written *Cratura* or *Gratura*) *tua assimilata est palme et ubera tua botris.* (cap. vii. v. 7.)

V. 17. Two scrolls: *Quis mihi det te fratrem, &c.* (cap. viii. v. 1.) *Ecce quam pulchra es, &c.* (cap. vii. v. 6.)

18. Two scrolls: *Favus distillans labia tua, &c.* (cap. iv. v. 11.) *Comedi favum cum melle meo, bibi vinum meum cum lacte meo:* (cap. v. v. 1.) Mr. Dibdin has inserted part of this composition in the first volume of his Bibliotheca Spenceriana, p. xxxix.

19. There are three scrolls in this composition: *Si dederit homo omnem substantiam suam pro dilectione, &c.* (cap. viii. v. 7.) *Lampades ejus sicut Lampades ignis, &c.* (cap. viii. v. 6.) *Aque multe non potuerunt extinguere charitatem:* (cap. viii. v. 7.)

20. Two scrolls: *Que est ista que ascendit de deserto, &c.* (cap. viii. v. 5.) I cannot find the other inscription, which begins *Ista est speciosa, &c.* in the Vulgate.—The figure of the Virgin carried up to heaven by an eagle, is copied at p. xi. of the first volume of the Bibliotheca Spenceriana.

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VI. 21. Two scrolls. *Ecce dilecto meo et ad me conversio, &c.* (cap. vii. v. 10.) *Revertere, revertere sulamitis, &c.* (cap. vi. v. 12.)

22. Two scrolls. I cannot make out either of the inscriptions upon them. On a mount, in the distance, appears the figure of Christ on the Cross, which, though of very minute dimensions, is drawn in every part with great intelligence, and is full of expression.

23. Three scrolls. *Dilecti me, egrediamur in agrum, &c.* (cap. vii. v. 11.) *Madragore odorem dederunt in portis nostris.* (cap. vii. v. 13.) *Videamus si floruit vinea, &c.* (cap. vii. v. 12. The figures in this design are prettily rouped, and are full of feeling and expression.

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24. There is but one scroll in this compartment. *Fasciculus mirre dilectus meus mihi, &c.* (cap. i. v. 12.) The virgin is represented supporting a crucifix.

VII. 25. Two scrolls. *Surgam et circuibo civitatem, &c.* cap. iii. v. 2.) The other inscription is not easy to decipher, and does not appear to correspond with any verse in the Vulgate. There are no less than twelve small figures in this composition, independent of the two armed men on horseback, which Mr. Dibdin has inserted at p. xli. of his Bibliotheca Spenceriana. They are all of them executed with surprising delicacy; especially the four half figures of a Pope, two Cardinals, and a Bishop, who are represented each with a sword and a shield, and whose heads are full of character and expression.

26. Two scrolls. The inscription on one of them does not appear to have been taken from any verse in the Canticles, and begins;—*Comedite amici et bibite, &c.* The other inscription is;—*Guttur illius sicut vinum optimum, dignum dilecto meo ad portandum.* (cap. vii. v. 9.) Christ appears, seated at a table, accompanied by the Virgin Mary and three female attendants: on the table are four chalices and three consecrated wafers.

27. Two scrolls. *Tota pulchra es amica mea, &c.* (cap. iv. v. 7.) *Tenui eum, nec dimittam, &c.* (cap. iii. v. 4.)

28. Two scrolls. *Ecce pulchra es amica mea, &c.* (cap. i. v. 14.) *Ecce tu pulcher es dilecte mi, et decorus. Lectulus noster floridus.* (cap. i. v. 15.) The subjoined

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group, extracted from this compartment, is remarkable for its easy gracefulness.

VIII. 29. This composition has three scrolls. *Mille clypei pendent, &c.* (cap. iv. v. 4.) *Ego Murus: et ubera mea sicut turris, &c.* (cap. viii. v. 10.) *Collum tuum sicut turris que edificata est cum propugnaculis.* (cap. vii. v. 4. et cap. iv. v. 4.) In this composition are two figures of angels, the draperies of which are admirable. They will be found copied after our description of the last print of the series.

30. Two scrolls. *Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat.* (cap. v. v. 2.) *In lectulum salomonis sexaginta fortes ambiunt, omnes tenentes gladios.* (cap. iii. v. 7. 8.) The group of warriors, standing behind the bed, is interesting by

Block Design

the varieties of armour, of which it furnishes specimens.

31. Two scrolls. *Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum.* (cap. viii. v. 6.) I cannot find the other inscription in the Vulgate, nor can I read it. Christ and the Madonna are represented supporting a large seal or stamp, on which is designed the mystery of the Trinity.

32. Two scrolls. *Species ejus ut libani, electus ut cedri, talis est dilectus meus.* (cap. v. v. 15. 16.) *Veni de Lybano Sponsa mea veni de Lybano, veni coronaberis.* I close my selections from this volume with the figure of Christ, who is represented about to crown the Madonna; and I have placed on each side of it the two angels mentioned under No. 29.

It has already been observed that Heineken, in speaking of this work, styles that edition the *first*, which I term the *second*. His enumeration of the pieces it contains is according to this latter edition, wherein some of the leaves appear to be placed differently from what they are in the original edition before us. Heineken supposes that the two subjects contained in each page, were engraved on one block; and consequently he only gives the beginning of the first inscription in the upper compartment of each of the sixteen pages. In the copy, which he describes, the four first pages, viz. Nos. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. are placed as in the copy before us; then come the two pages which I have described under Nos. 17. 18. 19. 20.; after these follow the two pages containing the Nos. 9. 10—11. 12.; and then the two pages containing Nos. 21. 22—23. 24.: these are followed by the pages containing Nos. 13. 14—15. 16; and lastly come the four pages, Nos. 25. 26—27. 28—29. 30—31. 32. I shall not attempt to account for this arrangement of the pages, so different from that of the original edition; but I thought it necessary to notice the circumstance, as the copy in the Bodleian Library, like that of Mr. Verdussen, at Antwerp, is arranged conformably to Heineken's list. See Heineken's "Idée Générale," p. 374. I must not omit to observe, that the Bodleian copy has been newly bound, and that each leaf is pasted down on paper of larger dimensions, in the ordinary way of mounting prints; so that the impressions do not alternately face each other, as they did anciently. This copy is also coloured.

SPECULUM HUMANAE SALVATIONIS;

called also

SPECULUM FIGURATUM.

The last block-book that I have undertaken to describe, is the "SPECULUM SALVATIONIS," so celebrated in the annals of typogra-

phical controversy; if indeed the appellation of block-book can properly be given to a work like the present, in which the text, accompanying the figures, is printed, for the most part, with moveable characters, in one edition of it, and, in the other editions, entirely so. In truth, it seems to hold a distinct place, midway between the ordinary books, printed entirely from engraved wooden blocks, and the first specimens of typography in its mature state; and is therefore, independent of its intrinsic merit, and the story attached to it, particularly interesting. I shall first briefly describe the work itself, and shall afterwards offer some remarks on the long disputed question of its origin.

This work, like the "Biblia Pauperum," and the "Book of Canticles," is of a small folio size, and is printed on one side of the paper only. There are four or five editions of it, in which the cuts are not copied from each other, (as in four of the editions of the Biblia Pauperum, and the two editions of the Book of Canticles;) but taken off from the same engraved blocks; besides two or three editions published, several years later, as it is supposed, in Germany, with figures designed and engraved in a much ruder style. I shall speak principally of the two editions which I have seen, in one of which the text is in the Latin—in the other, in the Dutch language.

The Latin edition is comprised in thirty-one sheets and a half, divided, according to Heineken, into five quires, or gatherings. The first gathering is of only five leaves, and contains a sort of introduction to the work, descriptive of its contents; the second, the third, and the fourth gatherings, have each of them fourteen leaves, and the fifth has sixteen leaves; making in all sixty-three leaves. This edition is, by most writers, considered the first; but its priority is by no means certain, as I shall hereafter shew.

In the Dutch edition, the introduction occupies only four leaves, and consequently there are only sixty-two leaves in the whole.

After the introduction, in both these editions, the remaining fifty-eight leaves are ornamented at top by wooden cuts of an oblong form, each of them divided in the middle by a slight Gothic pillar,

into two compartments; so that each cut contains two designs. These designs, for the most part, represent stories of the Old or New Testament; but the subjects of some of them are taken from passages of profane history, which the author of the work thought typical of the events recorded in sacred writ. Each subject has underneath it a short Latin inscription engraved on the same block, independent of the text, which is printed in two columns, and occupies the remainder of the page. The cuts are taken off like those of the two block-books already described, by means of friction, with a brown tint, in distemper.

I have observed in a former page * that there is reason to believe that the "BIBLIA PAUPERUM," the "BOOK OF CANTICLES," and the cuts of the "SPECULUM SALVATIONIS," were engraved in great part by the same wood-engraver, although from the designs of different artists. The remark, however, must be understood with some limitations. There is little doubt that the principal wood-engravers of those times had pupils who assisted them in executing the extensive works confided to their care. That part of a cut which required little skill, or that entire design which least captivated the taste of the master, was often entrusted to the scholar; and hence those occasional dissimilarities of execution which a careful observer will discover in different cuts of the same block-book, (especially in accessorial parts) although their general style be the same, and although they bear every evidence of having proceeded from the work-shop of one master-artist. Several of the cuts in the Speculum bear so striking a resemblance to some of those in the Biblia Pauperum, as to leave little or no doubt that they were engraved by the same hand; others, in their mode of execution, exactly correspond with some of those in the Book of Canticles. Upon the whole, therefore, I am of opinion that the same engraver, who had been employed to execute the blocks of the Biblia Pauperum, was also, but at a later period, entrusted with those of the Book of Can-

* See note, p. 142.

ticles; and lastly, or about the same time, with those of the Speculum; which work it is probable he did not live to complete; since the latter cuts of the Speculum, as I shall again have occasion to notice, were evidently engraved by a distinct artist from the one employed in the former part of that work; and, I think, from the compositions of a different designer.

Heineken observes, that the cuts of the Speculum appear to have been engraved on wood of a hard and close grain, and that he cannot sufficiently admire the skill of the artist by whom they were executed. "The most able engraver of our own times," says he, "could not surpass them, nor cut the wood with more delicacy and "clearness:" an eulogium not wholly unmerited, although, upon the whole, the engravings in the Speculum possess these qualities in a less eminent degree than those of the Book of Canticles.

Before I proceed to lay before the reader a list of the cuts in this curious volume, it is necessary for me to observe, that in the ancient manuscripts of the Speculum Salvationis, when they are entire, the work is composed of a preface and forty-five chapters, in prose Latin, with rhythmical terminations to the lines.

The preface contains a short account of the contents of the chapters. In each chapter, one principal subject is proposed; but three others, which the author considered allusive to the principal subject, are afterwards introduced. The subjects, for the most part, are taken from the Bible, or from the traditional history of the church; but some of them are selected from profane history. The three last chapters have, each of them, eight subjects. Thus Heineken informs us that, in the illumined manuscripts of this work, he invariably found that every chapter was ornamented with two paintings, each divided into two compartments, and containing two subjects; except the three last chapters, which had each of them four paintings, or eight subjects. The work therefore, when complete, should contain the designs of one hundred and ninety-two subjects, whereas the first printed editions of the Speculum have only fifty-eight cuts, or one hundred and sixteen designs.

In the course of the following catalogue of the engraved designs, I shall occasionally notice what I find commendable or defective, and from such spontaneous remarks, added to the specimens which will be presented to the reader, he will be best enabled to judge of their pretensions as works of art, or at least of the opinion of the writer concerning them.

Each cut, as has already been said, contains two historical representations, with short Latin inscriptions underneath them, explanatory of their subjects. They are placed in the following order.

CAP. I.

Impression

1. *The Fall of Lucifer.*
Casus Luciferi.

The Creation of Eve.
Deus creavit hominem ad ymaginem et similitudinem suam.

Heineken has given an indifferent copy of this print in his Idée Générale, p. 443. It is also copied in Meerman.

2. *Adam and Eve forbidden to eat of the Tree of Knowledge.*
De omni ligno paradisi commeditis.

Eve deceived by the Serpent.
Nequaquam moriemini sed eritis sicut discernentes, &c.

The naked figures of Adam and Eve in this and the following leaf, are drawn in a miserable style.

CAP. II.

3. *Adam and Eve eating the forbidden Fruit.*
Mulier decepit virum ut secum commederet.

Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise.
Angelus expulit eos de paradiso gladio ignito.

4. *Adam digging the Ground, and Eve spinning.*
Hic Adam operatur terram in sudore vultus sui.

The Ark of Noah.
Archa Noe.

The figure of Eve spinning, with the infant Cain seated in her lap, is not inelegantly composed.

CAP. III.

5. *The Birth of the Virgin predicted.*

Hic annunciatur ortus Marie.

King Astiages sees the Vineyard in a Vision.

Rex Astrages mirabile vidit sompnium.

The back-ground of the left hand compartment, represents a shepherd with some sheep, executed so exactly in the style of those introduced in two or three of the cuts of the book of Canticles, as

to leave little or no doubt that they were engraved by the same hand.

6. *The Garden and the Fountain, emblematic of the Holy Virgin.*	*Balaam and his Ass.*
Ortus conclusus fons signatus.	Balaam prenunciavit ortum marie in stella.

CAP. IV.

7. *The Nativity of the Virgin.*	*The Genealogical Tree of Christ.*
Nativitas gloriose virginis Marie.	Egredietur virga de radice Yesse.

Upon the upper part of the genealogical tree, in the right hand compartment, the Madonna is represented seated, with the Infant Saviour in her lap; the group, although extremely small, is executed with much taste and delicacy.

8. *The Gate of a City, closed, another Emblem of the Virgin Mary.*	*The Temple of Solomon.*
Clausa porta significat beatam virginem mariam.	Templum Salomonis significat beatam mariam.

CAP. V.

9. *The Offering of the Virgin in the Temple.*	*The Offering of the Table of Gold in the Temple of the Sun.*
Maria (oblata) est domino in templo.	Mensa aurea oblata est in templo solis.
10. *Jephtha sacrificing his Daughter in fulfilment of his Vow to the Lord.*	*The Queen Semiramis on the Top of a Tower.*
Jepte obtulit filiam suam domino.	Regina persarum contemplabatur patriam suam in orto suspensili.

The composition of Jephtha sacrificing his daughter is one of the

most spirited of the series, and is here copied. The female figure possesses considerable beauty and expression.

CAP. VI.

11. *The Marriage of the Virgin.*
Hic virgo maria desponsata Joseph.

The Marriage of Sarah and Tobit.
Hic Zara desponsatur Thobie juniori.

The author of these designs seldom failed in his representations of the female character. The figure of Sarah, in the compartment to the right, possesses a virgin modesty and an easy gracefulness of deportment which are particularly captivating.

12. *A Tower, upon which are Two Men blowing Trumpets.*
Hec turris dicta baris significat mariam.

A City, to the Walls of which are attached many Shields.
Hec turris david de qua pendebant mille clypei.

CAP. VII.

13. *The Annunciation.*

Hic annunciatur ihesus per angelum virgini marie.

Moses and the Burning Bush.

Dominus apparvit moysi in rubo ardenti.

14. *Gideon and the Fleece.*

Vellus gedeonis repletum etiam terra sicca manente.

Rebekah giving Drink to the Servant of Abraham.

Rebecca nuncio abrahe potum tribuebat.

CAP. VIII.

15. *The Nativity of our Saviour.*

Nativitas domini nostri ihesu christi.

The Cup-bearer of Pharaoh sees the Vineyard in a Vision.

Pincerna pharaonis vidit in sompnis vineam.

16. *Aaron's Rod.*

Virga aaron floruit contra naturam virtute divina.

The Sybil shewing to Augustus the Image of the Virgin.

Sybilla vidit virginem cum puero.

CAP. IX.

17. *The Adoration of the Magi.*

Tres magi adorant puerum cum muneribus.

The Three Magi seeing the Star.

Tres magi viderunt novam stellam in oriente.

One of the Magi, in the compartment on the right, instead of being on horseback, like the others, is seated upon a chimerical animal, with a long arched neck, and a head like a leopard. He seems to be explaining the purport of the celestial appearance to the two kings, his companions.

18. *The Three Warriors bringing the Water of the Cistern to David.*

Tres fortes attulerunt david regi aquam de cisterna.

Solomon seated on his Throne.

Thronus salomonis.

CAP. X.

19. *The Presentation in the Temple.*

Maria obtulit filium suum in templo.

The Ark of the Old Testament.

Archa testamenti significat mariam.

20. *The Candlestick in the Temple of Solomon.*

Candelabrum templi Salomonis.

The Infant Samuel devoted to the Lord.

Puer Samuel oblatus est domino.

CAP. XI.

21. *The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, and the Destruction of the Idols.*

Omnia ydola corruerunt intrante ihesu in egiptum.

The Egyptians adoring the Image of the Holy Virgin.

Egiptii fecerunt imaginem virginis cum puero.

The group in the left hand compartment is composed with great simplicity of style, and furnishes additional evidence in support of the opinion given at page 155; that the same artist who had engraved the "Biblia Pauperum" and "the Book of Canticles," was also employed to execute the work before us: the head of Joseph, and the general character of his figure, in this design of "the Flight "into Egypt," bear so striking a resemblance to the Joseph in "the Nativity" in the "Biblia Pauperum," copied at page 116, (although the attitude is different) as to amount to little short of proof that both were executed by the same wood-engraver.

22. *The young Moses breaking in Pieces the Crown of Pharaoh.*

Moyses projecit coronam Pharaonis et fregit.

Nebuchadnezzar seeing the Vision of the Statue.

Nabugodnasur vidit statuam in sompno.

CAP. XII.

23. *The Baptism of Christ.*

Jhesus baptisatus est a johanne in jordano.

The Vessel of Brass in which the Jews washed themselves upon entering into the Temple.

Mare eneum in quo ingressuri in templum lavebantur.

24. *Naaman cured of his Leprosy.*

Naaman leprosus (lavit) septies et mundatus est.

The Ark carried over the River Jordan.

Jordanus siccatus est in transitu filiorum dei.

CAP. XIII.

25. *The Temptation of Christ.*

Cristus triplicitur fuit temptatus a dyabolo.

Daniel destroying the Image of Bel, and killing the Dragon.

Daniel destruxit bel, et interfecit draconem.

26. *David killing Goliath.*

David superavit goliam philisteum.

David killing the Bear and the Lion.

David interfecit ursam et leonem.

CAP. XIV.

27. *Mary Magdalen at the Feet of Christ.*

Magdalena penituit in domo symonis.

The King Manasses in Captivity.

Manasses egit penitentiam in captivitate.

28. *The Return of the Prodigal Son.*

Pater familias filium prodigum suscepit.

Nathan reproaching David with his Sins.

David de adulterio redargutus penituit.

The calm but austere dignity of a monitor sent from God is finely

portrayed in the figure of Nathan, in the right hand compartment. The figure of David is very inferior, although not without expression.

CAP. XV.

29. *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.*

Cristus flevit super civitatem jherusalem.

Jeremiah upon a Tower, lamenting the Fate of Jerusalem.

Jeremias lamentabatur super jherusalem.

30. *The Triumph of David.*

David susceptus est cum laudibus.

Heliodorus beaten with Rods.

Helyodorus flagellabatur.

CAP. XVI.

31. *The Last Supper.*

Cristus manducat pascha cum discipulis suis.

The Israelites gathering Manna in the Wilderness.

Manna datur filiis israel in deserto.

Christ and the twelve apostles, in the compartment to the left, are seated on stools around a circular table. Judas is distinguished from the rest by having no diadem or glory round his head. The artist has committed a lamentable error of perspective—the nearest figures in the piece being represented of the smallest dimensions.

32. *The Jews eating the Paschal Lamb.*

Judei manducaverunt agnum paschalem.

Melchisedec meeting Abraham.

Melchisedech obtulit Abrahe panem et vinum.

CAP. XVII.

33. *The Soldiers, sent to take Christ in the Garden, struck to the Ground at his Word.*

Cristus prostravit hostes suos unico verbo.

Sampson killing a Thousand Philistines with the Jaw-bone of an Ass.

Sampson prostravit mille cum mandibla azini.

34. *Sanger killing Six Hundred Men with a Plough-share.*

Sanger occidit sexcentos viros cum vomere.

David slaying Eight Hundred Men with his Sword.

David occidit octingentos viros cum petu suo.

These two compartments, as well as that of Sampson in the last leaf, exhibit many interesting specimens of ancient armour, in a style very much resembling those noticed in one of the prints of "the Book of Canticles."

CAP. XVIII.

35. *Christ betrayed with a Kiss.*

Cristus dolose traditus.

Joab killing Abner.

Joab interfecit fratrem suum amasam.

36. *David playing on the Harp before Saul.*

Rex Saul reddidit david malum pro bono.

The Sacrifice and Death of Abel.

Cayn dolose interfecit fratrem suum Abel.

CAP. XIX.

37. *Christ insulted by the Soldiers of the High-Priest.*

Cristus fuit velatus, consputus et colaphisatus.

Hur insulted and spit upon by the Jews

Hur vir marie suffocatus sputo Judeorum.

38. *Ham mocking his Father Noah.*

Cam derisit patrem suum noem et alii eum condolebant.

The Philistines mocking Sampson when Blind.

Philistei Sampsonem exceccantes deriserunt.

The figure of Noah, in the left-hand compartment, although in the meagre style of the time, is designed with great spirit; especially in the head and hands, which evince, in every touch, the intelligence of a consummate artist.

CAP. XX.

39. *The Flagellation of Christ.*

Jhesus ad columpnam ligatus est et flagellatus.

The Prince Achior tied to a Tree.

Achior princeps ligatus est ad arborem a servis holofernis.

40. *Lamech tormented by his Two Wives.*

Lameth confligitur a malis suis uxoribus.

Job tormented by the Demon and by his Wife.

Job flagellabatur a demone et ab uxore.

I have caused the design of Lamech and his wives to be copied, and doubt not that the reader will appreciate its merits. The other compartment is, upon the whole, less agreeable, though the wife of Job is by no means an inelegant figure.

CAP. XXI.

41. *Christ crowned with Thorns.*

Cristus coronatur spinea corona.

A Concubine taking the Crown from the Head of a King and putting it on her own.

Concubina ipsius coronam regis acceptam sibi ipsi imposuit.

The ignominious bondage of the monarch in the right hand compartment, is well expressed; and the figure of the female is far from ungraceful.

42. *Schimei insulting David.*

Simey maledicit David.

The King Ammon disfiguring the Messengers of David.

Rex amon dehonestavit nuncios david.

CAP. XXII.

43. *Christ bearing the Cross.*

Cristus baiulavit crucem suam.

Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac.

Ysaac ligna portat pro sua immolatione.

44. *The Son of the Lord of the Vineyard murdered by his Servants.*

Exploratores uvam in vecte portant.

The Two Spies carrying the Bunch of Grapes.

Heres vinee projectus est extra vineam et interfectus est.

These two inscriptions, as Heineken observes, are misplaced: that on the right belongs to the subject on the left hand.

CAP. XXIII.

45. *Christ nailed to the Cross.*

Xpus crucifixus mortem suam figuris predixit.

Tubal-Cain superintending his Workmen, who are forging Iron.

Inventores artis ferrarie et melodiarum.

The author, says Heineken, intended to indicate by this type

that Tubal-Cain invented the nails by which Christ was fastened to the Cross.

46. *Isaiah suspended and sawed in Two.*

Ysaias propheta dividitur serra lignea.

A King killing his Child.

Rex moab immolavit filium super murum.

The naked figure of Isaiah, although in the meagre style of the time, is drawn with intelligence and spirit.

CAP. XXIV.

47. *Christ on the Cross between the Two Thieves.*

Cristus pendens in cruce.

The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar of the Tree cut down.

Nabugodnosor in sompnio vidit arborem.

The three naked figures of Christ and the two malefactors are also designed with great feeling and spirit.

48. *The King Codrus causing himself to be put to death for the good of his Country.*

Rex codrus dedit se ipsum in exicium pro suis.

Eleazar killing the Elephant by plunging his Sword into its Belly.

Eleasar confodens elephantem ab ipso oppressus est.

Thus far, according to Heineken, the chapters are conformable to the ancient Latin manuscripts.

49. *The Descent from the Cross.*

Dolor marie de filio.

Joseph's Coat brought to Jacob.

Jacob deflet filium suum Joseph.

I have already observed that the latter cuts of this series are certainly engraved by a different artist from the one who executed the preceding; and that the designs also appear to be of another hand. The truth of this remark will be sufficiently apparent to the reader

in the subjoined copy of the Descent from the Cross. He will observe, that in its style of design, as well as of execution, it differs very materially from those before copied. The tree, for example, on the right, is round and clumpy; and the hatchings, with which the figures are shaded, are ranged diagonally; whereas, in the preceding cuts, the figures are almost uniformly shaded by horizontal hatchings; and the trees, as may be seen in the cut copied at page 158, are of a conic form, with sharply pointed tops, like those of "the Book of Canticles." It is moreover proper to notice that, beginning with this page, the printed work, which, as Heineken observes, is so far conformable to the ancient Latin manuscripts, no longer continues to be so. I shall leave it to the research of future writers to account for this remarkable circumstance.

50. *Adam and Eve lamenting over the dead Body of Abel.*

Prothoplausti luxerunt necem abel.

Naomi weeping the Death of her Sons.

Noëmy flet mortem filiorum.

51. *The Burial of Christ.*

Hora completorii datur sepulture.

The Burial of Abner.

David flevit super exequias abner.

52. *Joseph put into the Well.*

Joseph missus in cisternam.

Jonas swallowed by the Whale.

Jonas a cete devoratus.

53. *Christ's Descent into Limbo.*

Sancti patres liberantur de inferno.

Moses leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt.

Israhel liberatur a Pharaone.

54. *God commanding Abraham to leave the Land of Ur.*

Liberatio Abraham de yr caldeorum.

Lot and his Family quitting Sodom.

Liberatio loth a sodomis.

55. *The Resurrection of our Saviour.*

Resurrectio domini nostri Ihesu Cristi.

Sampson carrying off the Gates of the City of Gaza.

Sampson tulit portas gaze.

56. *Jonas vomited up by the Whale.*

Exitus ione de ventre ceti.

Stone-Masons at Work.

Lapis reprobatus factus est in lapidem anguli.

57. *The Last Judgment.*

Extremum judicium.

The Parable of the Lord, taking an account of the Debts owing to him by his Servants, and causing the wicked Servant to be cast into a Dungeon.

Nobilis reversus ex longinquis fecit rationem.

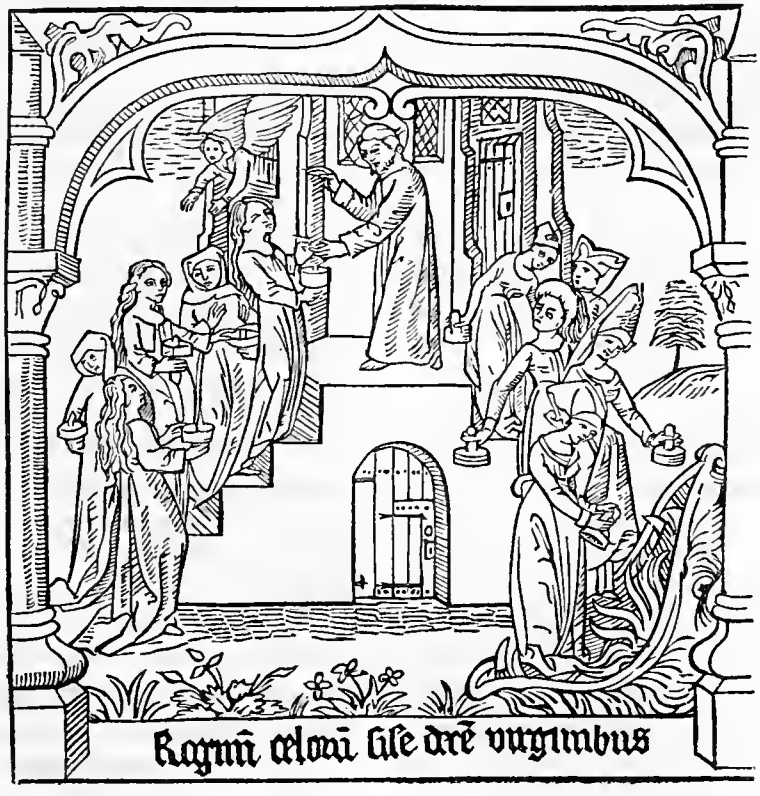
58. *The Parable of the Wise and the Foolish Virgins.*

Regnum celorum simile decem virginibus.

Daniel explaining the Hand-writing on the Wall.

Manus domini scripsit in pariete.

The cut representing the parable of the wise and foolish virgins is so beautifully composed, that I am sure the reader will be gratified by its introduction in this place. It would be difficult to point out any design of that subject, of later times, in which the story, to use a technical phrase, is better told, or in which the figures are more gracefully disposed.



The SPECULUM HUMANAE SALVATIONIS, as is well known, is ascribed, upon the authority of Hadrian Junius, a Dutch writer of the sixteenth century, to the press of LAWRENCE COSTER, of Harlem, (or, as he styles him, "LAURENTIUS JOANNIS, cognomento ÆDITUUS CUSTOSVE,") who, he assures us, was the true inventor of typography; notwithstanding that a contrary opinion in favor of the pretensions of the printers of Mentz had long gone abroad, and was become so deeply rooted in the minds of men, as to render its removal a task of extreme difficulty.

The account of Junius, which is given at length in the note below,* is in substance as follows:

* "Habitavit ante annos centum duodetriginta Harlemi in aedibus satis splendidis (ut documento esse potest fabrica quae in hunc usque diem perstat integra) foro imminentibus e regione Palatii Regalis, Laurentius Joannes cognomento Aedituus Custosve, (quod tunc opimum et honorificum munus familia eo nomine clara haereditario jure possidebat) is ipse qui nunc laudem inventae artis Typographicae recidivam justis vindiciis ac sacramentis repetit, ab aliis nefarie possessam et occupatam, summo jure omnium triumphorum laurea majore donandus. Is forte in suburbano nemore spatiatus (ut solent sumpto cibo aut festis diebus cives qui otio abundant) coepit faginos cortices principio in literarum typos conformare, quibus inversa ratione sigillatim chartae impressis versiculum unum atque alterum animi gratia ducebat, nepotibus generi sui liberis exemplum futurum. Quod ubi feliciter successerat, coepit animo altiora (ut erat ingenio magno et subacto) agitare, primumque omnium atramenti scriptorii genus glutinosius tenaciusque, quod vulgare lituras trahere experiretur, cum genero suo Thoma Petro, qui quaternos liberos reliquit, omnes ferme consulari dignitate functos (quod eo dico ut artem in familia honesta et ingenua, haud servili, natam intelligant omnes) excogitavit, inde etiam pinaces totas figuratas additis characteribus expressit: quo in genere vidi ab ipso excusa adversaria, operarum rudimentum paginis solum adversis, haud opistographis: is liber erat vernaculo sermone ab auctore conscriptus anonymo, titulum praeferens, *Speculum Nostrae Salutis:* in quibus id observatum fuerat inter prima artis incunabula (ut nunquam ulla simul et reperta et absoluta est) uti paginae aversae glutine commissae cohaerescerent, ne illae ipsae vacuae deformitatem adferrent. Postea faginas formas plumbeis mutavit, has deinceps stanneas fecit, quo solidior minusque flexilis esset materia, durabiliorque: e quorum typorum reliquiis quae superfuerant conflata oenophora vetustiora adhuc hodie visuntur in Laurentianis illis, quas dixi, aedibus in forum prospectantibus, habitatis postea a suo pronepote Gerardo Thoma, quem honoris caussa nomino, cive claro, ante paucos hos annos vita defuncto sene. Faventibus, ut fit, invento novo studiis hominum, quum nova merx, nunquam antea visa, emptores undique ex-

He relates that, " about an hundred and twenty-eight years " before he wrote, this Lawrence Coster resided in a large house, " situated opposite the royal palace at Harlem, which was still " standing. That Coster, during his afternoon walks in the vici- " nity of the city, began by amusing himself with cutting letters " out of the bark of the beech-tree; and with these, one after " another, the letters being inverted, he printed small sentences for " the instruction of his grand-children. That being a man of

ciret cum huberrimo quaestu, crevit simul artis amor, crevit ministerium, additi familiae operarum ministri, prima mali labes, quos inter Joannes quidam, sive is (ut fert suspicio) Faustus fuerit ominoso cognomine, hero suo infidus et infaustus, sive alius eo nomine, non magnopere laboro, quod silentum umbras inquietare nolim, contagione conscientiae quondam dum viverent tactas. Is ad operas excusorias sacramento dictus, postquam artem jungendorum characterum, fusilium typorum peritiam, quaeque alia eam ad rem spectant, percalluisse sibi visus est, captato opportuno tempore, quo non potuit magis idoneum inveniri, ipsa nocte quae Christi natalitiis solennis est, qua cuncti promiscue lustralibus sacris operari solent, choragium omne typorum involat, instrumentorum herilium ei artificio comparatorum supellectilem convasat, deinde cum fure domo se proripit, Amstelodamum principio adit, inde Coloniam Agrippinam, donec Magontiacum perventum est, ceu ad asyli aram, ubi quasi extra telorum jactum (quod dicitur) positus tuto degeret, suorumque furtorum aperta officina fructum huberem meteret. Nimirum ex ea, intra vertentis anni spacium, ad annum a nato Christo 1442. iis ipsis typis, quibus Harlemi Laurentius fuerat usus, prodisse in lucem certum est Alexandri Galli *Doctrinale*, quae Grammatica celeberrimo tunc in uso erat, cum Petri Hispani *tractatibus*, prima foetura. Ista sunt ferme quae a senibus annosis fide dignis, et qui tradita de manu in manum quasi ardentem taedam in decursu acceperant, olim intellexi, et alios eadem referentes attestantesque comperi. Memini narrasse mihi Nicolaum Galium, pueritiae meae formatorem, hominem ferrea memoria et longa canitie venerabilem, quod puer non semel audierit Cornelium quendam bibliopegum ac senio gravem, nec octogenario minorem (qui in eadem officina submiuistrum egerat) tanta animi contentione ac fervore commemorantem rei gestae seriem, inventi (ut ab hero acceperat) rationem, rudis artis polituram et incrementum aliaque id genus, ut invito quoque prae rei indignitate lachrymae erumperent, quoties de plagio inciderat mentio: tum vero ob ereptam furto gloriam sic ira exardescere solere senem, ut etiam lictoris exemplum eum fuisse editurum in plagiarium appareret, si vita illi superfuisset: tum devovere consuevisse diris ultricibus sacrilegum caput, noctesque illas damnare atque execrari, quas una cum scelere illo, communi in cubili per aliquot menses exegisset. Quae non dissonant à verbis Quirini Talesii Cos. eadem fere ex ore librarii ejusdem se olim accepisse mihi confessi." &c. &c. *Meerman Documenta*, No. 2.

" genius and research, and finding the ink then commonly used apt " to spread, he afterwards discovered, with the assistance of his " son-in-law, Thomas the son of Peter (who, he tells us, left four " children, most of whom, afterwards, enjoyed high offices in the " state) a more glutinous kind of ink, with which he succeeded in " printing entire pages with cuts and characters. That he, Junius, " had seen specimens of this kind, printed on one side of the paper " only, in a book entitled 'Speculum Nostræ Salutis,' written by an " anonymous writer in the Dutch language; the blank pages being " pasted together that the leaves might turn over, like those of an " ordinary book, without shewing the vacancies. That, afterwards, " Coster made his letters of lead instead of wood; and lastly of " pewter, finding that metal harder, and consequently, more proper " for the purpose; and that various drinking cups, made of the " remains of this old type, were still preserved in the aforesaid " house, where, but a few years before, Coster's great nephew, or great " grandson, Gerard Thomas, had died at an advanced age. That " the invention in question, soon meeting with encouragement, it " became necessary to augment the number of hands employed; " which circumstance proved the first cause of disaster to the new " establishment; for that one of the workmen, named John (whom " Junius seems to suspect might have been Fust—for he does not " absolutely accuse him), as soon as he had made himself sufficient " master of the art of casting the type, and joining the characters " (notwithstanding he had given an oath of secrecy), took the earliest " opportunity of robbing his master of the implements of his art; " choosing, for the completion of his purpose, the night preceding the " feast of the Nativity, when the whole family, with the rest of the " inhabitants of the city, were at church, hearing midnight mass. " That he escaped with his booty to Amsterdam, thence to Cologn, " and, lastly, that he took up his residence at Mentz, where he esta- " blished his printing press; from which, within the following year, " 1442, were issued two works, printed with the characters which " had been before used by Lawrence Coster, at Harlem; the one

" entitled ' Alexandri Galli Doctrinale,' the other, ' Petri Hispani
" ' Tractatus.' "

This account, Junius assures us, he had from several old gentlemen who had filled the most honorable offices of the city, and who, themselves, had received it from others of equal respectability and credit, as a well founded tradition; " as a lighted torch," says he, " passes from one hand to another without being extinguished." He adds, " that he well remembers that Nicholas Galius, the tutor " of his youth, who was an old gentleman of very tenacious me- " mory, used to relate that, when he was a boy, he had often " heard one Cornelius, then an old man upwards of eighty years " of age, who had been a bookbinder, and, in his youth, had " assisted in the printing office of Coster, describe, with great " earnestness, the various trials and experiments made by his " master in the infancy of the invention: upon which occasions " he would even shed tears, especially when he came to the story " of the robbery committed by one of the workmen, which he " related with great vehemence; cursing those nights in which, as " he said, for some months, he had slept in the same bed with so " vile a miscreant; and protesting that he could, with the utmost " pleasure, execute the thief with his own hands, if he had been " still alive:" " which relation," as Junius tells us, " corresponded " with the account which Quirinus Talesius, the Burgomaster, " confessed to him he had heard from the mouth of the same old " bookbinder."

The reader is no doubt aware, that it is very principally upon this testimony that the writers of Holland found, what they consider the undoubted pretensions of Harlem to the invention of printing: I say principally, because, whatever pains the writers of the adverse party may take to persuade us of the contrary, the pretensions of Harlem, and still less those of Holland generally, do not rest upon this evidence alone.

It must, indeed, be admitted, that Junius is the earliest writer at present known, who makes express mention of Lawrence Coster,

or Laurent Jansszoon, as the inventor of Typography; but he is far from being the first who asserted that that art was invented at Harlem.

Hadrian Junius was born at Horn, in 1511, and took up his abode at Harlem, in the year 1560: he commenced his work entitled "Batavia," towards the latter part of his life, completed it in January, 1575, and died on the 16th of June in the same year. His book was first printed in 1588. The passage relative to Coster is supposed, from its context, to have been written in 1568.

Now we learn from Scriverius, that a treatise expressly upon the subject in question, was written at Harlem, between the years 1549 and 1561, by John Van Zuyren,* who was sometime Scabinus or Sheriff, and afterwards Burgomaster of that city. Of the body of this work, which was composed in Latin, in the form of a dialogue, Scriverius feelingly regrets the loss; assuring us that, had it been preserved, it would have been unnecessary for him to have had recourse to the testimonies of Junius and others; and that Harlem, to the confusion of envy, would have then enjoyed the undisputed title to the invention of Typography. Scriverius has preserved the Latin title of this book, and some fragments of its dedicatory preface. The name of Coster does not appear. In one part, after admitting that the honour of having perfected the art of printing, and of having made it known throughout Europe, is justly due to Mentz, the author says, "Cæterum hoc teneat velim Amplitudo tua N. N. in hac urbe nostra Harlemensi prima esse jacta "opificii hujus præclari fundamenta, rudia fortasse, sed tamen

* Scriverius says: "a Joanne Zureno diu ante turbas belgicas compositus, cum ipse Scabinus Harlemi conservandis legibus dignissime præesset, atque nondum consulatum suscepisset;" and we learn from Meerman, tom. i. p. 63. that Van Zuyren filled the office of Scabinus from the year 1549 to 1561, when he was advanced to the dignity of Burgomaster. He died, aged seventy-four, in the year 1591. Scriverius's book was first printed at Harlem, in the Dutch language, in 1628. It is given in a Latin translation in Wolfius's Collection.

" prima. Hic nata et in lucem edita est Typographia (quod Mo-
" guntinensium pace dictum velim) suisque membris formata, ut
" succrescere posset; ac diu certe, ut nuper nati infantes solent,
" tractata figurataque sedulo, multosque hic annos intra privatos
" tantum parietes stetit, qui sunt modo,* quamquam ruinosi, tamen
" adhuc salvi et incolumes, tanto pridem partu suo orbati ac spo-
" liati misere." &c.

The whole of the fragments preserved of Zuyrenus's preface are extremely interesting. The author, says Scriverius, asserts as follows:

" Artem typographicam Harlemi primam esse inventam.

" Officinam primam typographicam temporibus ipsius auctoris,
" quum hæc scriberet, incolumem† adhuc fuisse, cum illis quæ
" ad eam pertinebant.

" Artem hanc novam atque tum adhuc rudem à peregrino quodam
" subductam,

" Hinc Moguntiam perlatam,

" Ibi vero exceptam, nutritam," &c.

Next in the order of time to the testimony of Van Zuyren, may be mentioned that of Theod. Volchart Coornhert, prefixed to that writer's translation of Cicero's Offices, in the dedication of the work to the Burgomasters, Judges, and Senators of Harlem, where the book was printed in 1561.

Coornhert, like Junius, assures us that he wrote upon the authority of " aged persons of the highest respectability and credit, who
" had repeatedly informed him, not only of the family of the in-
" ventor, and of his name and surname, but also concerning the
" rude manner of printing which he at first practised, and the place
" of his residence, which they had often pointed out to him with

* " Prospectantes in forum et curiam " nunc in duas tresve domus partiti ac divisi. " Ipsum typographeion antiquum ad Clariss. " *J. C. Dobbium* pertinet, habitatum à " bibliopego." *Note of Scriverius.*

† " Uti adhuc hodie, quamquam mutata " et diminuta, ut videre est in loco, qui " dicitur *Marckveld.*" *Note of Scriverius.*

" their fingers."* It may be fairly contended, in support of this account, that if the better informed classes of the people of Harlem, at the time, had been convinced that there was no good foundation for the tradition, and that it was no other than an old woman's tale, the writer would scarcely have thought of addressing it to the dignatories of the city, to whom it could not have been very gratifying to be selected as the fit persons to listen to a fable which no one else believed.

* The words of Coornhert, as translated by Meerman, (Documenta, No. 82) are as follow: " Viri spectatissimi prudentissimique, " sæpe mihi bona fide narratum est, utilissi- " mam artem typographicam in hac urbe " Harlemensi, etsi modo perquam rudi, in- " ventam esse; emendare enim inventa et ad " majorem perfectionis gradum perducere " facilius est, quam nova invenire. Postea " hanc artem servus quidam perfidus," (the name of Coster is here introduced by Scriverius, but without authority) " Moguntiam " transtulit, ibique illam perfectiorem reddidit, " et huic simul urbi inventionem hujus artis, " simulatque fama ejus rei divulgata esset, " conciliavit, adeo ut cives nostri, quando " hunc honorem vero inventori adscribunt, " vix apud quemquam fidem inveniant, cum " tamen res ipsa a multis in nostra urbe " propter notitiam certissimam omnino cre- " datur, et a civibus veteranis cunctis extra " omnem dubitationis aleam ponatur. Neque " me fugit, famam illam de Moguntia ob " majorum nostrorum incuriam temerariam " omnium mentibus tam altis infixam esse " radicibus, ut nullum argumentum, quamvis " evidentissimum, certissimum et invictissi- " mum fuerit, inveteratam illam opinionem " ex illorum animis evellere queat. Sed " quoniam veritas, etiamsi paucis nota sit, " veritas tamen manet, idcirco ego quoque " rem modo narratam certissimam esse credo, " convictus testimoniis fide dignissimis vi- " rorum senio et auctoritate gravium, qui " non solum de familia inventoris Har- " lemensis, sed etiam de ejus nomine et cog- " nomine me sæpe certiorem reddiderunt; " imo primum impressionis modum rudiorem " descripserunt, et primi typographi ædes " indice digito olim monstrarunt. Itaque, " non invidia honoris alieni, sed amore veri- " tatis inductus, intermittere non potui, quin " hanc rem ad gloriam promeritam urbi nos- " træ vindicandam paucis attingerem. Haec " honesta et justa honoris cupido videtur " etiam in causa fuisse, cur typographia in " hac urbe ad instar surculi e radicibus ar- " boris vetustæ denuo effloruerit atque incepta " fuerit. Etenim sæpe contigit, ut cives " nostri in congressum colloquiumque mu- " tuum venientes, quererentur, alios hoc " honore immerito frui, atque adhuc a nemine " post illud tempus (sic illi ne ullo quidem " contradicente loquebantur) hanc artem in " nostra urbe exercitam esse. His quoti- " diauis dictis effectum est id, ut ego sociique " mei, qui honestum laborem otio præ- " ferunt, consilium de typographia Harlemi " constituenda in hujus urbis honorem, alio- " rum emolumentum nostrumque commodum " absque ullius hominis damno promovendum " ceperimus."

Hitherto, however, it may be said, that our testimonies were Dutchmen.—True—but they were not, if we except Van Zuyren, natives of Harlem. Besides, they all agree in lamenting that their country had so long delayed publicly to establish its claims to that honour which was really its due; and the particulars of the oral traditions, preserved by the people of Harlem, could with difficulty be collected, except by one resident in that city; although the opinion that typography was there invented, was common throughout Holland.

This we learn from Ludovico Guicciardini, who, as he was an Italian, may be considered impartial as to the matter in dispute, and who thus noticed the pretensions of Harlem in his work, entitled "Descrizione di tutti i Paesi Bassi," written, as it is said, in the year 1565, and printed at Antwerp, in 1567. Speaking of Harlem (p. 180) he says:

"According to the common tradition of the inhabitants, and the "assertion of other natives of Holland, as well as the testimony "of certain authors and other records, it appears that the art of "printing and stamping letters and characters on paper, in the "manner now used, was first invented in this place: but the "author of the invention happening to die before the art was "brought to perfection, and had acquired repute, his servant, they "say, went to reside at Mentz; where, giving proofs of his know-"ledge in that science, he was joyfully received; and where, "having applied himself to the business with unremitting diligence, "it became at length generally known, and was brought to entire "perfection: in consequence of which, the fame afterwards spread "abroad and became general," (e inveterata la fama) "that the "art and science of printing originated in that city. What is really "the truth, I am not able, nor will I take upon me to decide; it "sufficing me to have said these few words, that I might not be "guilty of injustice towards this town and this country."*

* "In questa terra, non solo per voce "publica degli abitatori, e di altri Hol- "landesi, ma ancora per alcuni scrittori, e "per altre memorie, si trova, che fu prima-

The reader will observe that Guicciardini bears witness that, at the time he wrote, the pretensions of Harlem did not rest merely upon the authority of oral tradition—he refers, although, unfortunately, without specifying them, to the testimony of *certain writers* on the subject, and to *other records* then in existence. Like a cautious man, fearful of repeating an accusation, the truth of which he could not, or did not choose to be at the pains to ascertain, he softens the story of the robbery; but the deficiency of his testimony in this respect is amply made amends for, by the circumstance, which he alone records, that the workman of Coster did not go to Mentz until after his master's death.

The reader, little versed in the mode in which typographical controversy has of late been treated, will be, perhaps, not less surprized than I was, at the boldness of a recent French writer of some note, who, in the face of these and other documents, thus begins his examination of the claims of Harlem:

" A century had passed by, from the period of the invention of " printing," says Lambinet,* " when the inhabitants of Holland " began to think of asserting their claims to the honour of the dis- " covery. Adrian Junius first gave them the idea. That writer, " towards the end of his life, undertook to compose a description " of Holland, under the title of " Adriani Junii Batavia," which he " dedicated to the States-General, the 4th of January, 1575. His " death, which happened on the 16th of June in the same year,

" mente inventata l'arte dello imprimere, e " stampare lettere, e caratteri in foglio al " modo d'oggi: impero venendo l'autore a " morte innanzi, che l'arte fosse in perfe- " zione, e considerazione, il servidore suo " secondo dicono, andò a dimorare a Ma- " ganza, ove dando lume di quella scienza, " fu raccolto allegramente, e quivi dato opera " con ogni diligenzia a tanto negozio, ne " vennero all' intera notizia, e total per- " fezione; onde é poi volata, e inveterata la " fama, che di quella citta sia uscita l'arte e " la scienza della stampa. Quel che ne sia " alla verita, non posso, ne voglio giudicare, " bastandomi d' averne tocco un motto, per " non progiudicare a questa terra e regione." (Meerman—Documenta, No. 84).

* Origine de l'Imprimerie, tom. i. p. 262, et seq.

" when he was sixty-three years of age, put an end to his enter-
" prize. It was continued after his decease, and was not printed
" until the year 1588. It is, therefore, a posthumous work, which
" one or several continuators may have varied, interpolated, or
" augmented, according to their fancy."

The French writer then proceeds to give us what he, no doubt, considered a very fair, and, at the same time, a very spirited examination, (or, as he calls it, Analysis) of Junius's account; after which he sarcastically tells us, that "Fournier the younger, Kœhler, " Schœpflin, Fischer, and a great many other writers, have amused " themselves by refuting the statement of Junius seriously. Naudé," says he, p. 121, "asks Junius and his partizans, how John Fust, " or any other John, could have carried on his back the presses, " the type, the cases, the tables of stone, &c.? But this story of " the robbery," continues Lambinet, "is very aukwardly intro-
" duced in the romance of Junius; since, if we suppose Fust to " have been Coster's workman, he must have been, of consequence, " instructed in the mechanism of the art, and it must have been " very unnecessary and very inconvenient for him to have carried " off his apparatus."

It is certainly not necessary to the defence of Junius's credit as a *bona fide* historian, and still less to the cause of Harlem generally, that that writer's verbal correctness in every particular of his narrative should be absolutely proved. Junius, however, does not say that the robber carried off all the printing apparatus of his master upon his shoulders, and that at one journey. The tables of stone, and many other articles, he could easily provide elsewhere. The press, if, as is supposed, it was of a simple construction, he could readily get made under his inspection when he arrived at the end of his proposed journey: the type, and the matrices in which it had been cast, with a few other instruments, were all that could be moved without manifest danger of immediate detection, and were all he could want; and these, at two or three different times in the course of the evening, the thief might easily have carried to

a short distance beyond the gate of Harlem, where his accomplice waited for him with a small cart or other means of conveyance. More daring robberies are frequently committed in open day; and, in truth, the objections so often made against this part of Junius's account, are so frivolous as to be scarcely worth answering.

M. Lambinet proceeds to compliment the old gentlemen upon whose authority Junius wrote his account; facetiously styling them "des siècles parlans, et ambulans;" and, lest his readers should have forgotten his first assertion, repeats: "Such is the evidence upon which Harlem grounds her pretensions!"

But it will be proper briefly to examine the French writer's subsequent argument; as it furnishes a good specimen of the mode in which the question has been treated by most of those who have declared on the side of Mentz. Lambinet approaches with dignified steps, not doubting of an easy victory.

"When we are at a loss," says he, "to ascertain the truth of "facts, said to have taken place in former centuries, and in distant "countries, what are the means by which we may obtain any "moral certitude of their existence?—They are four: 1. The tes- "timony of eye-witnesses or of contemporaries; 2. Oral tradition; "3. Written history; and 4. Existing monuments.

"Now," says Lambinet, "we have no testimony of any person "who saw Coster's printing-office, from the year 1430 to 1440: "and even supposing one person to have witnessed it," (meaning Cornelius) "his insulated testimony as to so complicated an inven- "tion would be worth nothing. It could not be entitled to belief, "unless corroborated by several other eye-witnesses, who were "persons capable of understanding what they saw," (instruits) "of "undoubted probity, and free from all prejudice."

If nothing short of such ample testimony will satisfy M. Lambinet, it will not, I apprehend, be in the power of the partizans of Coster or of Harlem to bring him over to their side:—but it may fairly be asked of him, whether he is prepared to produce the testimony of several eye-witnesses of ability, undoubted probity, and unpre-

judiced minds, in support of the part which he has taken?—He continues:

"Oral tradition is a chain of testimonies given by persons who "have succeeded each other throughout the duration of centuries; "beginning from the epoch when the fact took place. This tra- "dition is neither faithful nor to be depended upon, except when "we can easily trace it to its source, by means of a series of inter- "mediate testimonies, until we arrive at those who were contem- "poraries of the fact; for if this chain is broken, and interrupted "by intervals,—in that case, as it does not hold together, it can "only lead us to falsehood: now Lawrence had no eye-witnesses "of his invention, and therefore he cannot have oral tradition in "his favor."

Unless the French writer takes it for granted that his readers should join with him, in the first instance, in condemning the relation of Junius as absolutely a tissue of falsehoods invented by himself, or by those who he says continued his book after his death, he cannot expect them to agree with him that Coster has not oral tradition, even such as he has defined it, in his favor: for the son-in-law of Coster, Thomas Peter, was an eye-witness of his invention, and assisted him in improving it; and Cornelius, the book-binder, was also an eye-witness of it when a young man; and, when grown old, related to Nicholas Galius, that which he knew and had witnessed; and Galius, in his turn, related what Cornelius had told him, to Junius. The chain of testimonies, even such as M. Lambinet insists upon, is therefore complete; and, as it is composed of but few links, it is, on that account, according to Mr. Locke's axiom, that in traditional testimony the fewer the removes, the greater the force of the proof, so much the stronger.

Nor, notwithstanding the French writer's pleasantry in styling these testimonies "walking centuries," is there any thing extravagant in the supposition of a fact having been thus preserved, and handed down to posterity by three succeeding testimonies, even

though it had taken place an hundred and forty years before it was, at length, recorded by the last of them ?*

Junius, who was born in 1511, we will suppose, wrote his account of Coster in 1568.—He received this account when a young man,

* Van Zuyren, Coornhert, Guicciardini, and Junius, all agree in speaking of the story of the invention of printing at Harlem, as a fact of public notoriety in that city, when they wrote; and indeed Guicciardini states that it was commonly believed throughout Holland—all of them agree that one of the workmen of the inventor carried the art to Mentz: and although the last-mentioned writer abstains from giving his sanction to the account of the robbery, it is very clear that he had heard it. —Now if we suppose this robbery to have taken place, as Junius says it did, in the year 1440, it becomes more than probable that even as late as 1568, when he wrote, persons were still living, who in their youth had heard the relation from those who lived when the event took place, and were acquainted with the circumstances attending it; and it is to be regretted that Junius, in addition to the respectable authorities of Galius and Talesius, who had formerly related to himself that which he recorded, did not, when writing his book, search out such persons, and insert their *viva voce*, or written declarations, in their own words.

I am now sitting on a cushion, the cover of which was embroidered near a hundred and twenty years ago, by some great aunts of my mother, whose testimony as to the fact I here give in her own words:—the reader will perceive that if Mrs. O. should live and preserve her intellects to the age of her aunt Mary, she may then bear witness to what she often heard related by the *principal* herself, of circumstances which took place a hundred and forty-four years before.

" *Brompton Row, May* 29, 1814.

" MY DEAR SON,

" IN answer to your inquiries " about the cushion *covers* in our possession, " *worked by the daughters* of my great " grandfather, John Taylor, Esq. I can only " with accuracy and certainty tell you, that " *I remember them* on the chairs, and a " settee, as it was then called, (before sofas " were introduced) belonging to the two " eldest of those ladies, *from my earliest* " *childhood*, as I lived much with them, and " particularly with the *senior* and *survivor* of " them, Mrs. Mary Taylor, who was born " in the year 1680, and has frequently told " me that these, and other curious pieces of " needlework, of which I have specimens, " were the performance of herself and sisters " in their youth, and *some* of them, but I can- " not say *which, of their mother*,—chiefly " done at my great-grandfather's house and " estate at Bifrons, in Kent: when, she said, " the Rev. Mr. Sacket, tutor to my grand- " father, Brooke Taylor, LL.D., used very " good-humouredly to seat himself in an high " window amid their circle, when he had " leisure, and read to them whilst they " worked. With regard to the *date* of that " period, *I think* it must have *begun* about " A. D. 1695—because Brooke Taylor, the " eldest brother, was not born till 1685 " (August the 18th, at Edmonton); and we

perhaps of twenty-five (An. 1536) from his tutor Nicholas Galius, who we may conclude was then full sixty-seven years of age,—for Junius speaks of him as an old gentleman of very tenacious memory, and such a description would not be suited to a younger man. Galius, when a youth—say of eighteen years of age, which brings us to 1487—heard the relation, several times repeated, from the mouth of Cornelius, the bookbinder, who was then upwards of eighty—we will call him eighty-two—and Cornelius, when a young man of three and twenty, lived with Laurence Coster—that is, in the year 1428.

This chronological calculation is far from unreasonable, whilst it accords sufficiently well with the general tenor of Junius's statement,* as well as the shorter account of Guicciardini. Indeed, if

" can hardly suppose he had a clerical tutor " before he was ten years of age, though, " from his rapid progress in learning, he was " entered a fellow commoner at Cambridge " at fifteen. His sister, Mrs. Mary Taylor, " my mother's aunt, and the eldest of John " Taylor's eighteen children, with whom I " often resided, was a fine sensible old lady, " and died at the age of *ninety*, in the year " 1771, when I was two and twenty. What- " ever she asserted might be depended on, " and I wish I had attended more particu- " larly than I did, to many curious anecdotes " she related—the above mentioned little " circumstance, however, is genuine.

" I remain, &c.

" Sar. Eliza. Ottley."

If the reader smile at the matter herein recorded, he will, I trust, at the same time acknowledge, that the record itself furnishes an illustration of the observations in the text, relative to oral and traditional testimony.

* I am obliged, however, to suppose Junius in error, when he states that Talesius, as well as Galius, had the narrative from old *Cornelius* himself. Of Nic. Galius, we find no mention after 1531, 1533, and 1535, in which years his name occurs in the Fasti of the city of Harlem, as Scabinus; and, consequently, we may reasonably suppose him to have been born as early as 1459: but Quirinus Talesius lived until the year 1573, when he was cruelly put to death by the Spanish soldiers. (Meerman, vol. i. p. 57.) It is therefore scarcely possible, unless we suppose both Cornelius and Talesius to have reached the age of nearly an hundred, that the latter should have heard the story from the mouth of the former.

It appears not improbable, that there were *two* bookbinders of the name of *Cornelius*, at Harlem; the one the son, or nephew of the other. For Meerman found mention of " *Cornelius the bookbinder*" in the records of the church of S. Bavon, at Har-

Lawrence Coster, or Laurent Janszoon, by whichever name we call him, was the first inventor of typography; and if the example of his imperfect attempts did give rise to the more successful endeavours of the printers of Mentz—it necessarily follows, I think, that we must date the period of his discovery of moveable characters, within the first thirty years of the fifteenth century. But to return to Lambinet, who, after having informed us concerning the qualities necessary to give authority to the testimony of eye-witnesses, and of oral tradition, now proceeds to speak of historical or written testimony.

"Written History," says the French writer, "records some "striking event that has happened in the presence of a multitude "of genuine witnesses, who make their depositions concerning it— "(sous les yeux d'une foule de témoins intègres qui déposent en sa "faveur.) The historian puts the testimonies of these witnesses "together; he calculates their different degrees of intelligence or "probity;" [I will not quarrel with Lambinet about the degrees of probity of these "témoins intègres"] "he considers their pre-"judices, their different interests; he compares their depositions "with each other;" &c. "he cannot attempt to impose a falsehood

lem, under the years 1474, 1485, 1487, 1496, 1503, 1507, 1508, and 1515. Now, if the chronology in the text is at all correct, Cornelius must have been an old man of ninety in the year 1496. I therefore think it more reasonable to conclude, that the four or five last dates above mentioned refer to a *younger Cornelius*, the relation and successor of him who had lived with Janszoon or Coster, and that Talesius had heard the story from this younger Cornelius,—than to suppose, with Meerman (vol. ii. p. 312), that they all of them relate to the same individual—a supposition which, as its consequence, forces Meerman to a conclusion little calculated to give weight to Cornelius's testimony; and which ill accords with the belief, that Janszoon or Coster died in the year 1440; viz. that Cornelius, when he lived with Coster, in 1440, was only ten or twelve years of age. If my hypothesis as to the two Corneliuses be admitted, every objection to the chronology in the text, that I am aware of, ceases; since Meerman found *memoranda* relative to Laurent Janszoon in the archives of the church of S. Bavon, of which Laurent was *Custos*, of the years 1423, 1426, 1432, and 1433.

" upon posterity; for his contemporaries, were his assertions un-
" founded, would cry out against him, and expose his error."

I know not what to make of M. Lambinet's definition of written history. Does he mean to say that no facts, except such as take place in the presence of a multitude of witnesses, who themselves immediately, or soon after, testify what they have seen to the historian, merit to be recorded? that the records of less public transactions do not deserve the name of history, and are unworthy of belief?

" Now, even according to the admission of Meerman himself," continues the French writer, " the Dutch historians did not speak
" of the invention of Lawrence Coster, until a hundred and thirty or
" a hundred and forty years after his death; viz. Van Zuyren," (Lambinet should have said Coornhert) " in 1561; Guicciardini, in
" 1567; Natalis Comes, in 1581; Junius, in 1588."

It is certainly very diverting to see M. Lambinet ending this catalogue of the Dutch historians, who spoke on the subject in question, with the name of Junius; who he had before told us was the FIRST person who put it into the heads of the inhabitants of Holland to lay claim to the honour of the invention.

" Before these writers," continues Lambinet, " Reinier de Snoy,
" Brassica, Heda, de Roya, and Erasmus, do not say one word
" upon the subject—Charles Van Mander and Jacques de Jongh,
" who wrote the history of the Dutch artists twenty years after
" Junius, make no mention of Coster: they even doubt that such a
" person ever existed.*—Indeed, in the posthumous works of John
" Wagenaar, published at Amsterdam, in 1787, in 12mo., under the
" title of ' Histories Chryver Jan Wagenaar,' we find, at page 108

* Here is another instance of *Lambinet*'s want of candour. If *Van Mander* made no mention of *Coster*, it was because he neither considered him as a painter, a sculptor, or an engraver; and he wrote the lives of the Dutch and Flemish artists, not the History of their Printers. *Heineken*, like Lambinet, (" Idée Générale, p. 281,") remarks the silence of Van Mander as to Coster, and endeavours to construe it as favourable to the side he had taken: " *Carl Van Mander*," says he, (p. 283,) " a crû, sans doute, que ce
" conte de *Junius* ne méritoit pas d'être rap-
" porté. Cela devient d'autant plus probable,

" of the second volume, an answer of Meerman to that celebrated " historian, who had asked his opinion concerning the history of " Lawrence Coster;—he frankly tells him that he does not believe " it.—He, however, say they, retracted what he had written in a " subsequent letter: he was, therefore, not firm in his opinion (il " n'etoit donc point ferme dans son opinion)."

I cannot suffer this observation of Lambinet, as to Meerman's wavering, to pass unnoticed. It is ample testimony that the learned Meerman possessed that candour and impartiality of which Lambinet and most other writers on the subject are so woefully defi-

" que cet auteur n'hésite pas de dire, que la " ville de Harlem *ose prétendre* à la gloire " de l'invention de l'imprimerie, &c."

To this passage Heineken gives the following note:

" *Carl Van Mander,* après avoir dit dans " la vie de *Van Eyck:* que les anciens pein- " tres seroient bien étonnés de voir nos pein- " tures à l'huile, ainsi qu'Achille, s'il enten- " doit nos canons foudroyans, inventés par le " moine Schwartz, il ajoute (fol. 200, de " l'édition de 1604, in 8vo.) *Que les aneiens* " *écrivains ne le seroient pas moins, quand* " *ils verroient l'art très utile de la typogra-* " *phie,* DONT LA VILLE DE HARLEM " S'ARROGEOIT D'AVOIR LA PREMIERE " INVENTION AVEC ASSEZ DE PRESOMP- " TION. *Daer Harlem met genoech bes-* " *cheyt, haer* VERMAET *den roem van* " *d'eerste vindinghe te hebben.*"

" Le zéle des Hollandois pour soutenir " leur fameux *Coster* va si loin, que Jaques " de Jongh n'a pas hésité de falsifier ce texte " de *Carl Van Mander,* dans sa nouvelle " édition de 1764. Il l'a changé, p. 16, " disant: *waar van Harlem zich, op ge-* " *noegzamen grond, den roem der eerste* " *vinding toeschrift;* DONT HARLEM AVEC " ASSEZ DE FONDEMENT S'ATTRIBUE LA " PREMIERE INVENTION, &c." This serious charge is answered by *Enschedius,* of Harlem, the printer, who, in a letter written by him, in Feb. 1776, to *De Murr,* and published at page 244 of the first volume of *Jansen*'s " Essai sur l'Origine de la Gra- " vure," after proving that one of the books of wood-cuts described by Heineken amongst the productions of Germany, is Dutch, and not German, says: " Je me sers de cette " occasion pour vous marquer l'erreur que " M. de Heinecke a commise dans son " *Idée Générale d'une collection complète* " *d'estampes,* page 283, quand il charge le " dernier éditeur de Karl van Mander d'avoir " falsifié le texte de son auteur. Cela est " *très-faux; le sens est le même dans la* " *dernière édition que dans la première,* " quoique paraphrasé du dialecte flamand en " Hollandois, comme on le parle à present. " Karel Van Mander attribue sûrement l'in- " vention de la typographie à la ville de " Harlem." The expression which Heineken has translated " ose prétendre" is doubtless no other than a piece of that pompous phraseology so common in the writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

cient, and is the best answer to the accusations of excessive patriotism, so frequently urged against him by Heineken, and the other writers of the Mentz party. Meerman, a Dutch gentleman, whom even those authors who have made themselves the most merry with what they term his erroneous decisions, have justly complimented upon his profound learning and erudition in typographical antiquities, is called upon, by his friend Wagenaar, as the person best able, from the local means of information which he possessed, and his known researches concerning the origin of printing, to give him an opinion concerning Coster—and he honestly tells him in reply, that he cannot, does not, give any credit to the story:—nay, he joins in all the arguments usually urged against Coster's pretensions—against the pretensions of Harlem.*

In the course of his further inquiries, the light of evidence, of the existence of which he had at first no idea, breaks in upon him, and he becomes, as some candid and learned writers have done before him, a convert to that very doctrine which he was preparing to oppose. Will any reasonable man affirm, that an opinion so formed, so corrected, is not worth a dozen of the opinions of those men who first judge, and afterwards seek for evidence?

Meerman, after he had discovered that evidence which induced him to abandon his old opinion, may, indeed, naturally be supposed to have embraced and defended his new one with augmented energy; inasmuch as it was conducive to the honour of his country: the cause, in which he then found himself engaged, was consonant to his wishes; and, as we are all inclined to believe that which we wish to be verified, it is probable that he no longer allowed small objections to stand in the way of a system of typographical history, which, he was convinced, was, in the main, true: but those opposed to him can never with justice affirm that the basis of his system is no where to be found, except in the patriotic zeal of its author.†

* This letter is given at length in the 1st vol. of *Santander*, "Dict. Bibliographique."

† If Meerman's change of opinion be to be brought forward as evidence against the cause

After mentioning two or three old writers who award the invention of printing to Mentz, M. Lambinet at length recollects the testimony of Ulric Zell in "the Cologn Chronicle."

"It is true," says he, "that in the Cologn Chronicle of the year "1499, Ulric Zell testifies that the first attempts at printing were "made in Holland; and that these were the Donatuses which long "before" (viz. before the invention of printing in Mentz) "had "been sculptured, (sculptes,) and had given the idea."

We shall presently shew, that the Cologn Chronicle does not state whether these Donatuses were printed from engraved blocks

of Harlem, it will be easy to shew that the writers of the opposite party are not wholly exempt from the same weakness. *Fischer*, in his "Essai sur les Monuments Typographiques "de Jean Gutenberg," (4to. à Mayence, An. X.) p. 64, prepares his readers for the description of some printed fragments lately discovered, which he ascribes to Gutenberg, in the following note: "Je ne balance pas "d'après ces mêmes observations à retracter "l'assertion que j'ai donnée dans mes *Typographischen Seltenheiten* (1 Livraison, "No. 3.) que le fragment de Donat que j'ai "fait graver appartenait à GUTENBERG. "La manière est tout-à-fait différente de la "sienne, et approche de celle que *Meerman* "attribue à LAURENT KOSTER. Il en est "de même de deux autres fragmens que je "possède, et dont l'un est un don du Cen. "Oberlin. Je crois que cette impression est "peu connue, et mérite une description par-"ticulière. *Fragmentum Doctrinalis Alex-"andri Galli, deux feuillets sur parchemin,* "in 4to. Caractère à gros corps, mobile, les "lignes, au nombre de 32 sur chaque page, "sont bien arrangées. Le noir est épais et "à l'huile. Le genre d'impression ressemble "à celui de la page d'un livre intitulé *Speculum Latinum, primae Editionis,* que "Meerman a fait graver. (Monument. Ty-"pograph. Tab. V.)—J'ai une autre feuille "sur parchemin qui est du même livre que "Meerman annonce comme la troisième "édition du Donat de Harlem. Mais com-"ment justifier que c'est LAURENT KOS-"TER qui l'ait imprimé? En examinant ces "deux feuilles avec attention, on reconnait "qu'elles sont sorties de la presse de "RICHARD PAFFRAET de Cologne, impri-"meur à Daventer." I may have future occasion to refer to this note; meanwhile, I know not how far I may depend on the assertion of Fischer, that this edition of *Alexandri Galli Doctrinalis,* was printed by *Paffraet*. The same edition seems to be spoken of by *Visser*, in his catalogue of books, without date, printed in the Low Countries, inserted in *Jansen*'s work, "de l'Invention de "l'Imprimerie." Visser ascribes the book to the press of the successors of Laurent Janszoon previous to 1470. He possessed two fragments of the work which, says he, p. 345, "servent de gardes à la 'Gemma "'Vocabularum,' imprimée à *Deventer*, par "Richard Paffraet, en 1495, qui est encore "dans sa première ancienne couverture."

or with moveable characters: in this place M. Lambinet is evidently endeavouring to mislead his reader.

" But the opinion of the learned in general, and of Meerman " himself, is, that six or seven other works of the same kind had " been engraved on blocks of wood, previous to these Donatuses, " in Germany and in Italy."

Here an acknowledgment of Meerman is ingeniously brought against himself. Of this I shall not complain, as it is only what I am endeavouring to do with Lambinet.

" Besides, if it had been certain that these Donatuses were en- " graved at Harlem, Ulric Zell would not have failed to mention this " birth-place of Coster, as he has expressly mentioned Strasburg " and Gutenburg for the first attempts of the art, and Mentz as " the place where it was perfected."

This kind of negative argument is now become very fashionable; it implies that each old writer must have known every thing which, when he wrote, could be known; and, as a matter of course, that he must have recorded every thing that he knew. Supposing, however, for a moment, that M. Lambinet is right in the opinion that the earliest block-books were printed in Germany and in Italy; and not in Holland; it will then be fair to infer that the Donatuses printed in Holland, which Ulric Zell mentions as having given the hint of typography to the printers of Mentz, must have been printed with moveable characters: for, if block-printing had been in use in Germany, or elsewhere, before it was practised in Holland, he could never have intended to say, that the idea of typography was taken by the German printers from the block-books fabricated in Holland; since those of Germany would have had at least equal claims to his mention, and he would never have travelled to Holland for that which could be found at home.

The testimony of Ulric Zell, as preserved in " the Cologn Chronicle," of 1499, is as follows; and is certainly, as far as it goes, entitled to be considered as most unexceptionable evidence on the side of Holland, generally; since Zell, who was the father of the

Cologn press, appears to have derived his knowledge of the art of printing at Mentz, and was a native of Germany:

"Item: this most revered art [of printing] was first discovered "at Mentz, in Germany; and it is a great honour to the German "nation, that such ingenious men were found in it. This happened "in the year of our Lord MCCCCXL; and from that time, till the "year MCCCCL, the art, and what belongs to it, was rendered more "perfect. In the year of our Lord MCCCCL, which was a golden "year, [or Jubilee year] then men began to print, and the first "book printed was a Bible in Latin, and it was printed in a larger "character than that with which men now print mass-books. "Item: although this art was discovered at Mentz at first, in the "manner in which it is now commonly used, yet the first example "of it was found in Holland, in the Donatuses which were before "printed there. And thence is derived the beginning of this art, "and it is [now] more masterly and subtle than the ancient manner "was, and by far more ingenious.

["The Chronieler," says Mr. Dibdin, who has kindly permitted me to extract this translation from the "Bibliotheca Spenceriana," "goes on to refute the assertion advanced by Omnibonus, in the "edition of Quintilian, of 1471, which makes Jenson the inventor "of the art of printing; and thus proceeds:]

"—but the first inventor of printing was a citizen of Mentz, and "was born at Strasbourg,* and was called John Gudenburch. "Item: from Mentz, the before-mentioned art first came to "Cologne, thence to Strasbourg, and thence to Venice. The "beginning and progress of the before-mentioned art was told "me, by word of mouth, by the worthy man, Master Ulrich "Tzell of Hanault, printer at Cologne, in the present year

* It is remarkable that Gutenberg is, in like manner, stated to have been a native of Strasbourg instead of Mentz, in the Chronicle, printed at Rome in 1474, by *J. P. de Lignamine*. This seems to have been a common error in very early times. See the "Bibliotheca Spenceriana," vol. iii. p. 252.

" MCCCCXCIX—by whom the forementioned art is come to Cologne."
" &c. fol. cccxii *recto.*"

Mr. Dibdin, in his observations on this interesting passage, answers the objections brought against it by Schœpflin in his *Vindiciæ Typographicæ* (p. 76-7); and corrects the erroneous assertion of that writer, who stated that Peter de Olpe, and not Ulric Zell, was the first Cologne printer. He proves that Zell printed there as early as the year 1466,—four years before Olpe—" Upon the whole," Mr. Dibdin observes, that " the evidence of Ulric Zell appears to be as " honest as it is curious."

But to return to Lambinet, who now comes to the fourth kind of evidence which he proposed to discuss—existing monuments.

" Those monuments whose origin can be traced to the period " when the facts, of which they are the witnesses, took place, are " without doubt the strongest proofs of historical truths. Their " number, their conformity, their agreement, prove the reality of " the fact, the moment they appear. It is impossible that the per- " sons living at the time, who saw them made, could have been " deceived with regard to facts at once numerous and of public " notoriety. It is impossible that the learned of our own days, who " have these authentic and speaking monuments before their eyes, " should be all of them mistaken as to their ancient existence, and " the events which have consigned them to us."

If by these " authentic and speaking monuments," Lambinet means ancient printed books without dates or colophons, I believe his position may be safely denied:—the learned, it is true, cannot all be in the same error concerning them, since scarcely any two of them are agreed:—might it not be asked of him, where are the authentic and undoubted specimens of the press of Gutenberg?*

* Even the celebrated Bible, of which I have spoken briefly in a note at p. 100, is doubted.—*Lambinet*, indeed, is decidedly of opinion that it is not that which was printed by *Gutenberg*, of which edition he says no copy is now known. See the first volume of his " Origine de l'Imprimerie," p. 130, & seq. *Fischer*, in his " Essai sur

"Now, I ask," continues he, "which is the authentic monument "of the invention of Lawrence Coster?—Where is it to be found? "Meerman, it is true, laboured five years to complete his *Origines* "*Typographicæ*, and Karnebeck has engraved plates of the pretended "characters of Coster, with the greatest care. It is impossible to "find greater research or more profound erudition, than what is "contained in this work," &c. &c. &c.——"But he never was "able to prove that 'the fragments of prayers' preceded by 'the "letters of the alphabet,' found pasted into the cover of an old book "by Enschedius, and printed on both sides, were the work of Lau- "rence Coster, any more than the Donatuses, the Speculum Salutis, "&c. which he attributes to him gratuitously." . . . . . .

"I conclude, therefore," says M. Lambinet, "with Chevillier, "Fournier, Heineken, Fischer, and the great majority of those "bibliographers who are well informed and free from prejudice, "that there exists no proof that Laurent, surnamed Coster, was "either an engraver, a sculptor, or a printer."

The man, confident in his own prowess, will not degrade himself by attacking his enemy unawares, ere he has buckled on his armour, and is prepared for the combat. The artful and cautious manner in which Lambinet has here disposed his forces, whilst none of those on the opposite side are at their proper posts, is of itself an indication of his weakness. He attempts to insnare his adversary, and to cut him to pieces in detail—fearing to risk a general engagement. He sets off with threatening his defeat, and, afterwards, that he may appear to have been as good as his word, proclaims a victory which he has not gained. But—to have done with metaphor—the whole argument of Lambinet is a tissue of sophistry, calculated to deceive his reader into the belief of premises, which, in great part at least,

les Monuments Typographiques de Jean Gutenberg," thinks differently, and ascribes it to Gutenberg, who, he is of opinion, printed it between the years 1450 and 1455, (p. 71. and p. 75). Fischer is probably right, —but where are the proofs which Lambinet requires?

are not true, and the admission of consequences which do not necessarily follow those premises.

Enough has been already said to prove that Junius was not the inventor of the traditions which he recorded; and that, without outrage to probability, those traditions may readily be supposed to have been preserved and handed down in the way which he and the other writers, who have been cited, describe. I shall now offer two or three remarks on some of the particulars of Junius's account; which, far from meriting the title of romance, by which Lambinet and many other writers have designated it, bears very strong marks of genuine testimony.

" Habitavit antè annos centum duodetriginta Harlemi in aedibus " satis splendidis, &c.—Laurentius Joannes cognomento Aedituus " Custosve, (quod tunc opimum et honorificum munus familia eo " nomine clara haereditario jure possidebat) &c."

Junius, it appears, was in error when he asserted that the office of Custos (Coster) was hereditary in the family of Laurent Janszoon; but this trifling incorrectness can in no wise impeach the verity of his narrative generally: that Laurent Janszoon was really the Custos of the church of St. Bavon, at Harlem, appeasr from the registers of that church, of the years 1423-1426-1432, and 1433, and it is very probable that, in consequence of his office, he was often called by the surname of Coster.

" Is forte in suburbano nemore spatiatus (ut solent, &c.) coepit " faginos cortices principio in literarum typos conformare," &c.

It has been urged, in objection to this passage, that the bark of the beech-tree is unfit for the purpose of making letters for printing; being soft, when it is green; and too brittle to withstand the force of the press, when dry. To this objection, it may be answered, that Junius does not assert that these small sentences were printed with a press:—they might have been printed, letter by letter, with the hand; and the letters might have been cut on square pieces of the bark of the beech-tree, prepared for the purpose, with a certain thickness of the solid wood attached to them, so as

to have been capable of resisting considerable pressure.* Of the dimensions of the letters here referred to, Junius says nothing:—they might, for aught we know to the contrary, have been of an inch square.—Upon the whole, we can only consider this passage as an obscure and imperfect tradition of the first attempts made by Coster to print with separate characters;—attempts, the success of which gave rise to his farther experiments; till at length the art, which had been at first taken up as the amusement of a leisure hour, became improved, and was practised by him as a profitable trade.

" Quod ubi feliciter successerat, &c.....cum genero suo Thoma " Petro, qui quaternos liberos reliquit, omnes ferme consulari " dignitate functos (quod eo dico ut artem in familia honesta et " ingenua, haud servili, natam intelligant omnes) excogitavit,"

Junius not only records the name of the inventor of Typography, and describes the place of his residence—but even mentions the name of his son-in-law, whom he says left four children, who afterwards enjoyed high offices in the government. These particulars of family history, confirmed as they appear to be by authentic documents, constitute abundant evidence as to the identity of Laurent Janszoon, and would have furnished ample means of detecting the falsehood of Junius, had he written with the intention of deceiving his readers: as for the trifling incorrectness of Junius, who speaks of four children of Thomas, the son of Peter, all of whom enjoyed the honors of the state,—whereas he had only three sons and two daughters—it is scarcely worth noticing. The difference is, indeed, good evidence that the genealogy of Coster's family, preserved by Scriverius, was not manufactured for the purpose of confirming Junius's statement.

Junius continues: " inde etiam pinaces totas figuratas additis cha-

* The conjecture in the text, was suggested to me by a block, probably of Asiatic manufacture, in the possession of Mr. Singer. The letters are of the diameter of about half an inch each; and appear, upon examination, to have been cut separately, on wood of the thickness of an eighth of an inch, and afterwards glued upon the plain surface of the block.

" racteribus expressit: quo in genere vidi ab ipso excusa ad-
" versaria, &c.....is liber erat vernaculo sermone ab auctore con-
" scriptus anonymo, titulum praeferens, *Speculum Nostrae Salutis,*
" &c." " Postea faginas formas plumbeis mutavit, has deinceps
" stanneas fecit," &c.

I shall presently speak of the editions of the Speculum with which I am acquainted, meanwhile I must observe, that I am inclined to consider the word *postea* of Junius, in this place, in the same light in which I have found by experience, we must so often take the words *dopo* and *poi,* in the writings of Vasari: viz. as no other than a means (carelessly and improperly used) of connecting two sentences together; and I have no doubt whatever, that if the edition of the Speculum, of which Junius here speaks, was the same as either of the Dutch editions now known, it was printed, not with separate characters of wood, but with types of metal. Let the sentence, beginning with " Postea," precede that, in which Junius describes the Speculum, and the whole will be intelligible. That the letter-press of that work should have been printed, as Meerman supposes, with moveable characters of wood, is, I hesitate not to say, impossible.*

Junius proceeds: " e quorum typorum reliquiis quae superfuerant
" conflata oenophora vetustiora adhuc hodie visuntur," &c.

It would have been more satisfactory evidence of the ancient existence of Coster's printing office, say the opposers of Junius, if his descendants had preserved the remains of his old type in its original state!! True—but that they should have converted it into useful, and, perhaps, ornamental articles of furniture, was by no means unnatural; and it is to be remembered, that if Junius wrote that, for which he had no authority, for the purpose of imposing upon his readers, it would have been as easy for him to have stated that the old type itself still existed in Coster's house, as that it was converted into drinking cups.

* Meerman appears to have changed his opinion afterwards, and to have declared in favor of type, the shafts of which were cast, and the letters upon them cut by hand.

Upon the story of the robbery I shall here offer no remark, except that it is evident from the words of Junius, when speaking of the robber: "postquam artem jungendorum characterum, "fusilium typorum peritiam, &c.....percalluisse sibi visus est," &c. that the type stolen from Coster was cast type.

It is unnecessary to add to what has already been said concerning the authorities upon which Junius wrote his account. If either they or he be entitled to our respect, it follows, I think, that his narrative, if defended at all, must be defended as, in the main, true;—not explained away, so as to suit a previous hypothesis; nor weakened by indiscreet concession, with a view to conciliate contending interests. If there be any truth in the assertion of Junius, that Coster printed the Speculum previous to the establishment of printing at Mentz, he was the inventor of Typography, properly so called;—not of moveable characters of wood only, as Meerman satisfies himself with insisting upon, but also of cast metal types:—the printers of Mentz, indeed, will still claim the praise of having given the last polish to the newly discovered art—of having shewn, by the vastness of their undertakings, that they first appreciated its importance—and of having disseminated the knowledge of it throughout Europe:—but to Coster will belong the invention.—If, on the other hand, it can be clearly shewn that this work, the only one expressly ascribed to Coster by Junius, was not printed at Harlem, and that its claims to antiquity have been greatly overrated—then it will be vain to pursue the controversy, and we shall be justified in concluding, with the majority of writers on the subject, that the pretensions of Coster have no solid foundation.

I have already stated (p. 154) that one of the Latin editions of the Speculum is generally considered as the first edition of the book. I say generally; because Meerman has taken immense pains to prove that a Dutch, or Flemish edition, of which two copies are preserved at Harlem, is the most ancient; and Junius, as we have seen, when speaking of the work, mentions a Dutch edition only. It is however probable that Junius had not happened to see a Latin

copy; and it would, in any case, be too much to argue from his silence, as to the Latin editions, that he believed them to be less ancient than the Dutch, or printed by another hand.

The chief arguments in favour of the priority of the Latin edition, (I speak of that which is commonly called the *first Latin edition*) are two:—first, the inscriptions under the cuts are in the Latin language; a convincing proof, it is insisted by the opposers of Meerman, that the artist, whoever he was, had an edition in that language in his contemplation when he engraved the cuts; and, secondly, the text in that edition is in part printed from engraved wooden blocks, in the manner of the ordinary block-books; which gives strong grounds for the belief, that the printer, at the commencement of his undertaking, was ignorant of the art of printing with moveable characters, but that he discovered it in the course of the work.

In the Flemish or Dutch editions, on the contrary, the text is entirely printed with moveable characters; a circumstance which, when coupled with the anomaly occasioned by the inscriptions under the cuts being still in the Latin tongue, furnishes, it must be allowed, strong presumptive evidence that those editions were afterthoughts of the printer; and executed by him, after the first Latin edition, for the convenience of such as were unskilled in the dead languages.

Heineken forcibly urges these arguments in favour of the priority of this Latin edition. "It is admitted," says he, "that the Flemish "edition is printed entirely with moveable type, how then can any "one suppose that it is the first? Is it probable that the printer, "whoever he was, after he had printed one edition entirely with "moveable type, should have had recourse to an engraver in wood "to assist in preparing a second edition? And, if we suppose that "he himself was an engraver in wood, and the inventor of typo-"graphy, what must have been his folly to abandon his invention "in a second edition?

"When Meerman insists," continues Heineken, "that it was not

" Coster himself, but his heirs after his death, who printed this " Latin edition,—part with wooden blocks, and part with moveable " characters of wood,—he is hurried away by his patriotism, and " forgets that neither Cornelius nor Junius say one word concerning " the press of the heirs of Coster.

" In addition to this," continues the same writer, " I must ob- " serve, that it is by no means probable that an ancient printer " should have thought of printing a translation, rather than an " original, when the original itself had not been yet printed. All " the world will agree at least that the ancient manuscripts of this " book are in Latin, and that the Flemish translation is more " modern. The example which Meerman cites of the Bible, first " printed in Flemish, makes against him. The Latin Bible had " been previously printed in Germany. It is therefore more than " probable—nay, almost certain—that the Speculum Salvationis " in Latin, was, in like manner, first printed in Germany; and that " it was afterwards translated and printed in the Low Countries."*

This argument of Heineken is, upon the whole, a good one; but his conclusion is, as usual, the result of the same patriotic zeal of which he accuses Meerman. For the text in the Flemish edition is printed, as he himself observes in another page,† with the very same type which was used in printing forty-three pages of the Latin edition; and it is surely extremely improbable that the engraved cuts, and the type also, should have found their way from Germany into the Low Countries.

Heineken conjectures that the Speculum Salvationis is less ancient than the block-books before described. He is of opinion, " that the artist who engraved the twenty pages of text on wooden " blocks," in the Latin edition, " was one of those employed by " Gutenberg and Fust; (for," says he, " they had certainly " engravers in their service,) and that this engraver, having himself " become a printer, finished the remainder of the work with cast

* " Idée Générale," pp. 451, 452. † Idem. p. 449.

" metal type, newly invented." Who this pupil of Gutenberg and Fust was, or who was the author of the cuts, he has not given us any clue to discover.*

He is also of opinion, " that we cannot safely conclude that " the cuts and the text were engraved and printed at the time, " merely because the cuts represent the same subjects described in " the text. It is very certain," says he, " that Latin manuscripts " of this work existed, ornamented with vignettes painted in dis- " temper, in several of the libraries of Germany, at least as early " as the twelfth century, and nothing therefore would have been " more easy than for a designer or engraver in wood to copy these " vignettes after one of those manuscripts, and to engrave them in " wood, long before any one thought of printing the Latin text or " the Flemish † translation."

To this argument, which I cannot help suspecting was used by Heineken as a measure of caution, (lest the antiquity of the cuts, and the school in which they were executed, should hereafter be proved, and brought forward as evidence in favor of the pretensions of Harlem) it may reasonably be objected, that, had such been the case, some copy or fragment of the work, without the printed text, would probably be found; whereas no such copy is known to exist: and, moreover, that the characters in the short inscriptions at the bottom of the cuts, although they were perhaps engraved by a different artist from the one who engraved the twenty pages of text in the Latin edition so often mentioned, appear to be of the same age. It should seem therefore most reasonable to conclude, (under the supposition that the Latin edition is really the first) that the whole was undertaken at the same time; the execution of the cuts being confided to one or more artists skilful in engraving figures; the pages of text, to others more accustomed to that department of wood engraving; and that the printer, in the

* Idée Générale, pp. 446, 447. † Idem, p. 449.

course of his operations, became informed of the method of printing with moveable characters, or himself discovered it.

But even supposing this to be certain, which I shall presently shew is very far from being the case, it would go but a little way in support of Heineken's opinion, that the Latin Speculum, and the first editions of all the block-books which he describes, are the productions of Germany.

The arguments in favour of the priority of the Latin edition in which the text is in part printed from engraved blocks, appear indeed so strong, that, on first considering the subject, I felt little difficulty in joining with the great majority of bibliographical writers in the opinion, or rather conviction, that that edition was really the most ancient. Accident, however, put me in possession of undoubted evidence that such was not the case; and the axiom, that one proof is worth a dozen arguments, was strikingly exemplified. For an opportunity chanced to offer to me of comparing two very fine copies of the Speculum;—one, of the Latin edition above-mentioned,—the other, of what is commonly termed the second Dutch edition;* when I most unexpectedly discovered that the impressions of the cuts, in the Dutch copy, had been taken off previously to those in the Latin copy; and, consequently, that the Dutch is the oldest of the two.

This was ascertained, beyond the possibility of doubt, by a very careful comparison of many of the cuts in the two copies; for, although, upon a first view, the impressions in both appeared equally perfect, I perceived, upon a minute examination, that several of those in the Latin edition had been taken off after certain little pieces of the engraved blocks, some of them in the central parts of the compositions, had been broken away by the operation of printing them; whereas in the Dutch copy, the impressions of those little pieces were complete.

* They were the property of the late Ralph Willett, Esq. The Latin copy, shortly after I saw it, was purchased by the Marquis of Blandford. Lord Spencer has since bought the Dutch copy.

Those, who are conversant with the subject of wood engraving, well know that engraved blocks are extremely liable to this species of accident upon their being first printed;* especially in those places where the thin projecting strokes are not sufficiently supported and strengthened by other strokes in their immediate vicinity; and will immediately perceive that the deficiencies in the impressions of the wood engravings in the Latin Speculum, in parts which are found perfect in the impressions of the Dutch edition, constitute certain proof that they were taken off *after* those of the Dutch edition.

For these small deficiencies in the impressions of the Latin edition cannot be accounted for by the supposition that the blocks were not sufficiently covered with the ink when they were printed; or that the accidental intervention of some thin body, which might have fallen on the block after it was charged with the ink, prevented the paper from coming in contact with the ink in those parts; since the places where the little pieces have been broken out from the blocks, previous to printing the Latin edition, are clearly determined; and are, indeed, distinctly perceptible, even on the backs of the impressions; in consequence of the shining appearance of the paper, as well as the indentation occasioned in it, in all places where it came in contact with the projecting strokes of the engraved block, during the application of the friction by which the impressions were taken off.

As I am probably the first bibliographical writer (if, during this chapter, I may be allowed to assume the title) who has thought of resorting to this mode of ascertaining with certainty the relative ages of the different editions of such books as are ornamented with impressions taken from the same engraved blocks; and as my discoveries in this instance may be found of some use to him who shall hereafter feel disposed to prosecute such further inquiry

* Their liability to such accidents was probably still greater, under the mode of printing them by friction, formerly used.

into the claims of Harlem as may reasonably promise, in their result, the means of pronouncing justly concerning this long disputed question, I am induced to illustrate my observations by the following fac-similes, shewing the minute differences in the impressions of several of the cuts in the two editions of the Speculum above mentioned.* I premise, lest the reader should suppose these

* My first discovery, as has been said, was made upon a comparison of the two copies before mentioned. The Marquis of Blandford's Latin copy I have not since had an opportunity of examining further; but by the kindness of my friend, Mr. Singer, I have been furnished with the loan of another Latin copy of the same edition; by means of which, and the Dutch copy of Lord Spencer, who has liberally entrusted it to my care for a few days, I have been enabled to prepare the elucidations now presented to the reader. Both these copies have the good fortune not to have had the blank sides of their leaves pasted together.

The Dutch copy of Lord Spencer has therefore been compared with two copies of the edition called "the first Latin;" and the same *imperfections* in the impressions of the cuts have been found in *both the Latin* copies, in places which are found *perfect* in the edition called "the *second Dutch*." I have little or no doubt that the same variations will be found upon comparing any two other copies of the same editions; and, if this be the case, I submit that these circumstances, added to the fact of there being no copy or fragment of this work known, in which the pages under the cuts are left blank or filled up by manuscript, constitute unanswerable evidence that the cuts and the text were printed at *the same period*; and that, consequently, there is no ground whatever for the opinion of Heineken, mentioned at p. 201, that the cuts were, or might have been, engraved long prior to the printing of the text: unless, indeed, we are to admit the extravagant supposition, that an artist engraved these cuts twenty or thirty years previous to the invention of typography, *for the purpose of having them ready to produce when that art should be invented!* Nor is the hypothesis of a friend of mine more admissible; who, having long been accustomed to consider the Latin edition, in part printed with wooden blocks, as the most ancient, and being unwilling to relinquish his old opinion, suggests, that the printer, to whom the engraved cuts appertained, took off, in the first instance, as many impressions of the cuts as could be wanted *for all the different editions which he might, at any future time, be called upon to publish*; (let us suppose a thousand impressions of each cut;) and that, these impressions being tied up in bundles, it might, and did, so happen, that the impressions last taken off came into use in printing the first edition of the book.

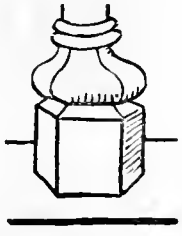
There is, in fact, only one reasonable and safe conclusion to be drawn from the variations in the impressions of the cuts; viz. that those editions, in which we discover imperfections in the impressions of the cuts, such as I have described, not to be found in other editions, are of a date posterior to those editions in which such imperfections do not appear.

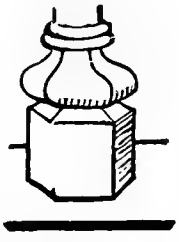
specimens to have been selected partially, with a view to favor my argument, (and lest, in consequence, he should be disposed to doubt whether or not the whole of the impressions in the edition, commonly called "the First Latin," were taken off *after* those of the "second Dutch edition," as it is termed,) that, where a fracture is discoverable in any cut in the Dutch edition, the same is invariably found in the Latin edition: often, however, with considerable augmentation, as will now be shewn.*

Edition, commonly called the SECOND DUTCH EDITION.	*Edition, commonly called the* FIRST LATIN EDITION.

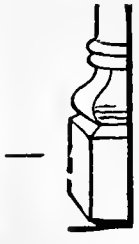
Impression

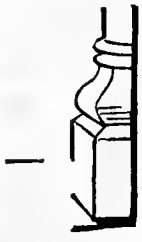
2. The base of the pillar dividing the two subjects is perfect in the Dutch copy. One of its perpendicular lines is broken away in the Latin:





8. Base of the pilaster on the right hand: one of the perpendicular lines is in some degree fractured in the Dutch copy:—the piece is broken away in the Latin:





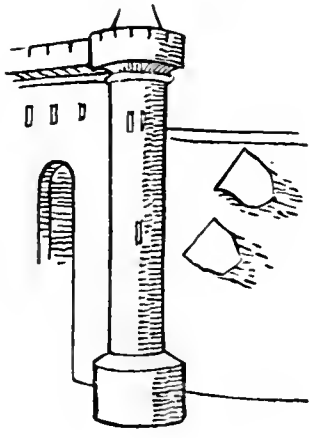
* These engraved illustrations are *facsimiles*, no further than as respects *those parts of the blocks which*, previous to the printing of the Latin edition, had suffered fracture, and are noticed in the text. Minute exactness, in copying every touch of the graver, in other parts, was not deemed of importance.

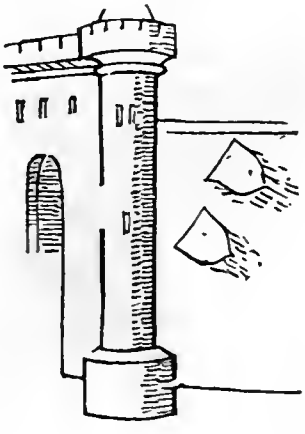
Impression

10. The base of the pilaster on the right hand bears evidence of a similar fracture of the block, in the Latin copy:

11. Capital of the small pillar over the head of the Virgin: a small piece of it broken away, in the Latin copy:

12. The tower in the right hand compartment, which is perfect in the Dutch copy, shews signs of a considerable fracture in one of its perpendicular lines, in the Latin:



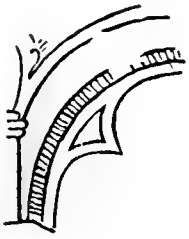


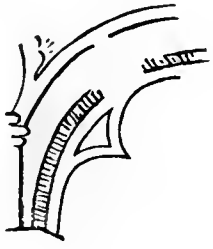
Impression

14. Right hand corner at bottom: the foot of the servant of Abraham is perfect in the Dutch copy, but fractured in the Latin, and a piece of the horizontal line underneath it, which is found in the Dutch copy, is wanting in the Latin:

17. Left-hand compartment.—The left spandle of the arch, which is fractured in the Dutch copy, shews marks of still greater injury in the Latin;—part of one of the curved lines having been forced out of its place in the block, previous to printing the Latin copy:

46. Left-hand compartment.—The left curve of the arch is already fractured in the Dutch copy;—the fracture is considerably augmented in the Latin:



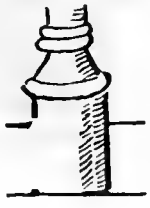


Impression

In the base of the central pillar, in the same cut, one of the perpendicular lines, which is perfect in the Dutch copy, is fractured in the Latin:

In the same cut, the block had received a small fracture in one of the upright lines of the base of the pilaster on the right-hand, previous to its being employed for the impressions of the Dutch copy:—in the Latin copy, the whole of that line is wanting:

55. Base of the pillar in the center: considerably fractured in one of its upright lines, in the Latin copy:



Impression

The Base of the pilaster, or half pillar, on the right, in the same cut, appears likewise fractured in the Latin copy, as also a part of the perpendicular marginal line: whereas both these pieces are perfect in the Dutch copy:

The discovery thus made* of the relative ages of the two editions of the Speculum above mentioned, rendered me desirous of ascertaining, by similar means, the order of time in which the two other ancient editions of this book were put forth; "the first Dutch "edition," as it is called, and "the second Latin." Of the former edition, two copies, said to be the only ones at present known, are preserved at Harlem; and that city likewise possesses a copy of the second Latin edition—also a book of very great rarity.

Through the intervention of a friend,† I was a short time since enabled to transmit to Holland a few queries, the answers to which,

* It is surprizing that neither *Meerman* nor *Heineken* should have thought of recurring to this mode of ascertaining the relative ages of the four early editions of the Speculum; since they both knew that the cuts in all of them were taken off from the same identical blocks, and even observed that the impressions, in some editions of the work, did not appear so perfect as in others. The former, ("Origines," tom. i. p. 106.) when speakiug of Veldener's edition of 1483, says of the cuts; "Quae tamen ex frequenti usu "tabularum illic aliquantulum apparent de-"tritae;" and the latter, ("Idée Générale," p. 144.) amongst his arguments in favour of the priority of the edition which he calls "the first Latin," goes so far as to assert (which we have seen is not the truth) "that "he has remarked, that in 'the second "'Latin' and in 'the Dutch editions,' the "impressions of the strokes are ruder, and "not so sharp; because," says he, "the "blocks had been in use some time before "the impressions for those editions were "taken off."

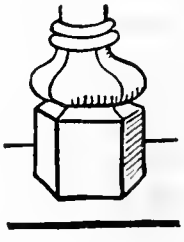
† Mr. James Walker; whose excellent mezzotintos after some of the pictures in the imperial collection at Petersburgh are well known. By means of this gentleman, my letter was put into the hands of Mr. W. H. S. Westreenen, of the Hague, Director of the Literary Academy of Zealand, Member of

I had reason to flatter myself, would put me in possession of the information sought for. Being aware of the possibility that my queries might be put into the hands of a decided partizan of Coster, and, perhaps, a strenuous supporter of the hypothesis of Meerman, I took care not to preface them by any thing which might lead my then unknown correspondent to suppose that their writer had any particular doubts as to the priority of the edition which Meerman has taken so much pains to prove to be the first. The questions, as to the fractures in the blocks, were confined to six in number; which, with the answers received, are here inserted.

Query I.—In the impression of the *Second Cut*, in the *first Latin edition* of the Speculum, the base of the central pillar, dividing the two subjects, has one of its perpendicular lines wanting: thus—

Is this line wanting in the *first Dutch*, and in the *second Latin* edition?

Answer.—" The part of the line, marked with points,* is open in " the *first Dutch*," as above, " but complete in the *second Latin* edi- " tion;"—thus:



that at Leyden, and Correspondent of the Dutch Institute. Mr. Westreenen had the goodness to forward my queries to his correspondent at Harlem, the learned bookseller and poet, Loorjes, and to transmit me the answers here given. I regret that I have not had the opportunity of seeing a work upon the discovery of printing, which Mr. Westreenen informs me he himself published in 1809.

* In my letter to Holland, I had used points to mark the vacant places concerning which I desired to be informed, in order to fix the attention of my correspondent to those particulars the more effectually. They are here omitted.

Query 2.—In the impression of the *Third Cut* in the *first Latin*, and in the *second Dutch* edition, a small part of the upright line of the base of the pilaster on the right hand is wanting:—Is it wanting in the *first Dutch* and the *second Latin* editions; and is the fracture augmented in either of them?

Answer.—"The part of the line marked with points is open, both "in the *second Latin* and *first Dutch* editions."*

Query 3. In the impression of the *Eighth Cut*, in the *second Dutch* edition, a small part of the horizontal line, above the word *mariam*, adjoining the base of the pilaster on the right hand, is wanting,—thus:

is this piece wanting in the *first Dutch* and *second Latin* editions?

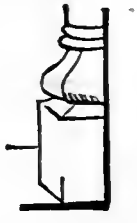
Answer.—"In the horizontal ground line, the part marked with "points is complete in the *second Latin* and *first Dutch* editions."

The answer given to this question furnishes evidence that the edition of this work, commonly called the *second Latin*, preceded that termed the *second Dutch*, and, consequently, that it is the *first edition of the book*. But that the edition called the first Dutch, should, also, be complete in the impression of this piece of line, which is wanting in the edition called the second Dutch (notwithstanding this last is of a prior date) is not easily to be comprehended. I am, therefore, obliged to suppose that the copy of the Dutch edition, upon which

* I do not think it necessary to give a facsimile of this little piece, as the answer received to my question involves no consequence whatever. Had this line been found *complete* in the second Latin edition, whilst in the first Dutch, the *fracture was augmented*, it would have proved not only that the edition called "the second Latin" was the *first* edition of the book, but also that the first Dutch, as it is termed, was the *fourth*.

my correspondent at Harlem made his remarks, happened to be restored, in this place, by a leaf of the second Dutch edition; (for we know that neither of the two copies of the first Dutch edition, at Harlem, are complete*) in which case the circumstance may easily be accounted for; since it is very possible that the block might not have suffered this small fracture until after the *whole* of the impressions from it, for "the second Latin edition," and *part* of those for "the second Dutch edition," had been taken off. The fracture, after all, is so small, that in case the impression in the first Dutch edition happened to be smeared in that part, it might easily escape the observation of any but a most scrutinizing eye.

Query 4.—In the impression of the *Tenth Cut*, one of the perpendicular lines, in the base of the pilaster on the right hand, is wanting in the *first Latin* edition, thus:



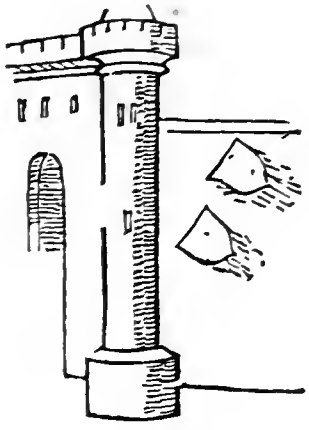
Is this line wanting in the *second Latin* and *first Dutch* editions?

Answer.—"In the base of the column at the right, the part of the "line marked with points, is complete in the *second Latin*," thus:

"but open in the *first Dutch* edition."

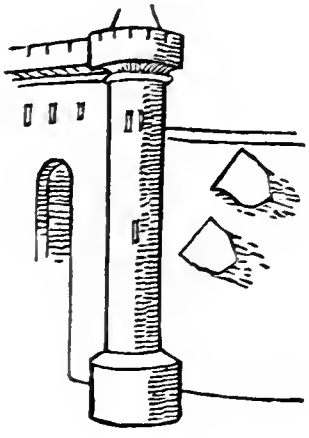
* See Meerman, "Origines," tom. i. "Idée Générale," p. 454. p. 117. note (b x) and Heineken,

Query 5. In the right hand compartment of the cut, No. 12, a part of the perpendicular line of a tower, therein represented, is wanting in the *first Latin* edition; thus;



Is that part of the said line wanting in the *second Latin* and *first Dutch* editions?

Answer.—" The part of the perpendicular line of the tower, " marked with points, is complete in the *second Latin* edition," thus:



" but open in the *first Dutch* edition."

Query 6. In the same cut, the chief part of one of the perpendicular lines of the base of the pilaster on the right, is wanting in the *second Dutch* and *first Latin* editions; thus:

Is this line wanting in the *first Dutch* and *second Latin* editions?

Answer.—"The part of the line, marked with dots, is complete "in both the editions."

The answers given by my correspondent to the third and sixth queries, would, when taken together, constitute most satisfactory evidence that the edition of the Speculum, called "the second Latin," is in reality the first edition of the book; were it not that he asserts, that the small pieces of lines, referred to in these queries as wanting in "the second Dutch" and "first Latin editions," are perfect in *both* the other editions—a circumstance, which, in the present instance especially, is calculated to create some doubt of his accuracy: since it is absolutely impossible that the impression of the piece of the block, referred to in the sixth query, (which we know with certainty was broken away *before* the part of the line of the tower, in the same cut, was fractured) should be found *complete* in an impression taken from the block *after* the line of the tower had been broken. Either my correspondent, when he wrote the answer to this question, did not exercise his usual accuracy, or he must have been led into error from the circumstance of this line's happening to have been *restored* in the Dutch copy *by a pen.*

Upon the whole, it appears certain, as well from the answers given to the above queries, (especially the 1st, the 4th, and the 5th,) as from our previous investigation, that the two most ancient editions of the Speculum, are "the second Latin" and "the second Dutch editions," as they are called; and not those whose rudeness of impression has occasioned every previous bibliographical writer to ascribe priority to them.

The SECOND LATIN EDITION, as it has been hitherto improperly called, was, I am well persuaded, the FIRST EDITION OF THE BOOK; not only because of the reasons just now given, but, also, because it is evident, from the Latin inscriptions under the cuts, that the proprietor of the work first meditated an edition in that language. The text in this edition appears to have been entirely printed with the same type which was afterwards used for the whole of "the second Dutch edition," as it is called, except two pages; and also for forty-three pages of the edition called "the first Latin."*

The edition commonly called "the second Dutch edition" was probably commenced soon after the above: in this edition, as has been just observed, there are two pages printed with a type considerably different from the rest.

Of the two remaining ancient editions of the Speculum, hitherto called "the first Latin," and "the first Dutch," I know not to which to ascribe the priority. Nor can I speak with accuracy as to the characters with which the edition last named was printed, further than that they were moveable types. The observations of Meerman, as to the marks made in the paper in many places, by the blank type used by the printer, instead of plain pieces of wood or metal, to fill up those spaces in the pages which were intended to be left white,—whether for the future insertion of initial letters, or at the termination of sentences—are decisive as to that point; and clearly prove that there is no ground for the supposition of M. Daunou (Lambinet. tom. i. p. 323) that this edition is entirely xylographic. The Latin copy before me exhibits several

* Indeed *Meerman*, when speaking of the form of the characters, in the four first editions of the Speculum, (Origines, tom. i. pp. 108, 109) says: "In omnibus vero quatuor editionibus (si quaedam folia principis Latinae, fixo charactere excusa, excepero) unius ejusdemque semper figurae est, neque nisi magnitudine et nitore aliquantulum dispar, imo in postrema tum Belgica tum Latina editione mihi videtur ipsissimus." *Meerman* had not seen the edition called "the first Latin," which was described to him by *Fournier*. It is certainly printed with the same type as "the second Latin" and "second Dutch editions."

instances of the kind in those pages which are printed with moveable type; and traces of a similar effect are to be discovered in some parts of Lord Spencer's Dutch copy; although with difficulty—in consequence of the great pressure which, perhaps accompanied by damp, appears, upon some former occasion, to have been applied to it, by the book-binder. Were I to judge from the engraving given by Meerman of the first cut, and the accompanying text of the page, copied from the edition which he terms "the first Dutch," I should feel little hesitation in judging it to have been printed with the same type as the other three editions; although, perhaps, with less neatness and care, and with ink of an inferior quality. For the variations of form and dimensions, discoverable in different specimens of the same letters in the engraved copy (variations which, no doubt, exist in the original in a smaller degree) are easily to be accounted for, when it is remembered that Meerman believed the work to have been printed with carved wooden characters; and that his draftsman, Van Noorde, and the engraver, A. I. Polack, being so instructed, would naturally, in making their copy, be inclined to augment the almost imperceptible or equivocal variations of the original into decided differences.

Meerman, however, mentions one circumstance which might lead to the supposition that the type with which this edition was printed, was not identically the same as was used for the other editions. The type in this edition, he informs us, (tom. i. p. 120) is somewhat smaller than that of the edition which he styles "the second Dutch;" for that twenty lines of text in the former, occupy only the same space as nineteen lines in the latter edition. It is, therefore, possible that the edition called "the first Dutch," may have been printed with a type cast in imitation of the type used for the other editions, in consequence of the original type having been worn out or lost before that edition was required.

This diversity in the type of the edition called "the first Dutch," were it ascertained, would justify us in considering that edition as the last of the four; and would, consequently, enable us to arrange the

four early editions of the Speculum, in the order in which they were published. For, from the evidence which has been brought forward, it is certain that the two editions of the work, hitherto believed to be the third and fourth, are, in reality, the first and second; and there is, also, as has been said, every reason to believe that the edition called "the second Latin" was the first of those two. Upon the whole, we cannot be far wrong in placing the four editions in the following order. The only doubt can be, which of the two last was the third published.

First, The edition hitherto called "the second Latin."
Second, That called "the second Dutch edition."
Third, That called "the first Latin edition."
Fourth, That called by Meerman "the first Dutch edition."

The justness of this arrangement being admitted, it would not be difficult for any one who should advocate the cause of Harlem, to take up a formidable position, even upon the very basis of the opinions and admissions of those who have argued on the other side. For Heineken, whom most of the bibliographical writers of the Mentz party refer to as their oracle in such matters, has expressed the belief that the last but one of these four editions (the first Latin) "was printed just at the time of the invention of typography;"* and Daunou (whose modesty, in his admirable little trea-

* "Cette quantité de feuilles imprimées par la presse," says Heineken, speaking of the edition which he calls the *first Latin*, (Idée Gén. p. 447) "et cette manière de poser une vignette à la tête du discours, me portent à conjecturer, que le *Speculum Salvationis* est plus moderne que les livres précédens," (the *Biblia Pauperum*, the *Ars Moriendi*, &c. &c.) "et *publié justement du tems de l'invention de la typographie.* Je m'imagine que le graveur, qui a taillé ces vingt tables de discours en bois, étoit un de ceux que *Gutenberg et Faust* employerent; car ils avoient sûrement des graveurs à leur service, et je crois que ce graveur, étant devenu lui-même imprimeur, a fait le reste de l'ouvrage avec des *lettres de fonte nouvellement inventées*, d'autant plus que ces caractères ressemblent entièrement, pour la forme et pour le dessein, aux tables du *Donat*, et généralement aux caractères de l'attelier de *Faust* et de *Schoeffer*." This last assertion of Heineken is unfounded—the characters of the *Speculum* do not resemble the type of *Fust* and *Schoeffer*.

tise given at the end of the first volume of Lambinet, is a corrective of that writer's over confidence) observes (p. 421) that "the Speculum Salutis, executed in part with wooden blocks, and partly with cast type, is, perhaps, anterior to the year 1460;" adding, however, (doubtless because he saw that the characters were those of the Low Countries, and not of Germany) that, "if, as Heineken supposes, it was printed by one of the workmen of Gutenberg or Fust, there is little reason to believe that that workman was established at Mentz."

Now, if in conformity to the opinions of these writers, we should place the third edition of the Speculum (the first Latin) about 1455, and if it be, at the same time, admitted as probable, that an average period of a little more than seven years intervened between each two editions,—the first edition of the book must, according to such a calculation, have been printed about the year 1440—which is all that the writers on the side of Harlem contend for.

But as, on the one hand, it would be unfair to encumber the cause of Lawrence Coster with all the absurdities which his zealous, but indiscreet friends have insisted upon in his behalf; so, on the other, it would be injustice to Gutenberg, were we to take advantage, to his detriment, of an opinion hazarded, perhaps incautiously, by one or more of the advocates of his claims.

It will, therefore, be proper for us to inquire how far the internal evidence of the four early editions of the Speculum (which, from the general conformity of their execution—the paper on which they are printed—the resemblance of the type in all of them, and the identity of that type, in three—there can be little doubt were printed at the same press) may justify the two following conclusions—1st, that they were printed in Holland; and, 2dly, that they are of higher antiquity than any of the books printed in that country by those printers who are commonly said to have first introduced printing into Holland, and are known to have established themselves in different towns of that country, and other parts of the Low Countries, after the year 1472. For if these two points

are established in the affirmative, the *onus* of accounting for the existence of these books, printed in Holland before, according to the writers on the side of Gutenberg, the art of printing was there known, will rest with that adverse party; and they will be constrained, at length, to confess the probability that there is more truth in the story of Coster, or Janszoon, than they have hitherto been accustomed to acknowledge.

The first of these points it will not be difficult to establish. Any person generally conversant with early printing, will, upon viewing either of the four first editions of the Speculum, immediately pronounce that it was printed, not in Germany, but in the Low Countries :* upon a more close examination, he will perceive that the angular Gothic, and broad-faced characters of that work (to use a technical expression) bear a much nearer resemblance to the types commonly used in the fifteenth century in Holland, than to those generally adopted by the chief printers of the more southern parts of Belgium; and if he have the opportunity of comparing a sufficient number of the early printed books of Gouda, Utrecht, and other towns of Holland, with those published contemporarily at Louvain, and other parts of Brabant, he will not long hesitate to declare that Holland has a better claim to the execution of the work in question, than any other country.

To this it may be added, that fragments of books, printed with the same type as the Speculum, and others with type so like it, as to render the distinguishing between one and the other a matter of no small difficulty, have been discovered at Harlem, and in other parts of Holland, pasted into the covers of ancient books; and that it is certain that the blocks from which the cuts of the Speculum were taken off, existed in Holland in 1483, in which year, John

* Being little conversant in the types used by the early printers, I have had recourse to the experience of my friends, Mr. Dibdin and Mr. Douce; both of whom assure me that I am warranted in my *assertion;* and I also collect from them, as well as from an examination of early books printed in different towns of Holland and Brabant, that I am well justified in the opinion which follows it.

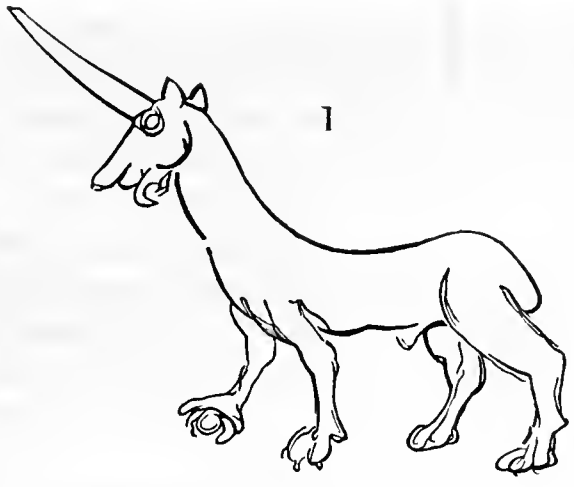
Veldener published, at Culenbourg, a new edition of the work, in the Dutch language, containing the impressions of the same blocks; the whole printed in a quarto size,—Veldener having caused each of the blocks to be sawed down the central pillar, into two pieces, for that purpose.

Moreover, two out of the four earliest editions of this work, are printed in the Dutch language, such as it was commonly spoken in the fifteenth century, in that part of Belgium which is now called Holland; but which was never generally used in the more southern provinces of the Netherlands, where the Flemish language formerly prevailed, as it does at present.*

To all these arguments it may be added, that the paper-marks found in the four earliest editions of the Speculum, do not occur in books of the fifteenth century, printed in any part of Germany, south or east of Cologne; (if we except one mark which is found in some of the books of Schoeffer, printed at Mentz) but, for the most part, resemble those commonly found in the early printed books of the Low Countries, and more especially in those of Holland; and that some of these marks occur, exclusively, in the books of the early Dutch printers. Upon this point, however, the reader may require evidence in support of my assertion, and he is, therefore, here presented with the tracings of these paper-marks (at least all those which occur in the two copies of the book before me) carefully made from the originals, and accompanied with the authority of an eminent bibliographer, as to the ordinary occurrence of most of them in the earliest printed books of Holland and Flanders.†

* This I say upon the authority of a gentleman, to whom I have shewn the Dutch Speculum, and who, having resided many years at Utrecht, is thoroughly conversant both with the Dutch and Flemish languages.

† *Santander*, the writer in question, properly observes, ("Supplement au Catalogue des Livres de la Bibliotheque de M. C. de la Serna Santander," 8vo. *Bruxelles*, 1803,) that although the paper-mark of a book can, of itself, neither enable us to discover the name of the printer nor the age of the book; nevertheless, it may often lead us to well-founded conjectures as to the *place* of its impression. "En effet," says he, "j'oserai bien affirmer "qu'on peut connoître aussi aisément par



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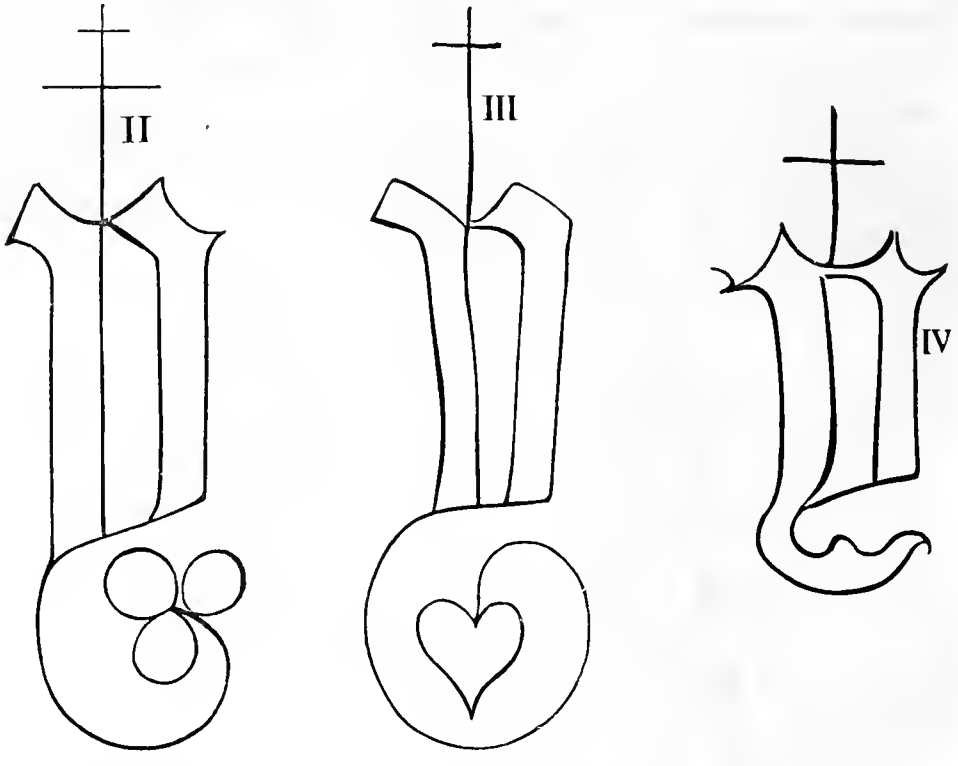
The mark, 1., representing a singular kind of unicorn, is the only mark that is found on the paper of Lord Spencer's copy of what is called "the second Dutch edition," from the beginning of the work until the forty-fifth cut—(the first of the two pages that are printed with type different from the rest of the volume)—during which space it occurs twenty-four times; but it does not once appear in the latter part of the book; nor is it to be found in Mr. Singer's copy of what is termed "the first Latin edition." I learn, however, from my correspondent in Holland, that this paper-mark is found in the edition called "the second Latin," on the leaves containing the cuts numbered 47. 48. 50. 52. 55. 56. and 57; and that it occurs twice in what is called "the first Dutch edition;" viz. on the leaves containing the cuts numbered 20. and 22. Meerman, in speaking of the different editions of the Speculum, mentions this mark, which, it is to be observed, does not occur among the paper-

"l'inspection du filigrane du papier que par "la forme des caractères d'un livre du quin- "zième siècle, s'il a été imprimé en Italie, "en Allemagne, ou dans le Pays-Bas et la "Hollande; de manière qu'ayant recours "ensuite à quelques autres indices typogra- "phiques, on parvient facilement à connoître "le lieu de son impression et quelquefois "l'imprimeur même." Had Santander examined the paper-marks in the different editions of the Speculum, he would not have made the assertion alluded to at p. 109, that Heineken had proved that this work, and all the old block-books with figures engraved in wood, were originally engraved and printed in Germany.

marks collected together and published by Santander, in his "Sup-" plement" to the catalogue of his library :—for the unicorn which he has given in his second print, under No. 36, and which he tells us, in his text, occurs in books printed at Cologn, by Ulric Zell, Arnold Therhoernen, and Joh. Guldenschaff; and in others printed at Alost, by Theod. Martens, and by Joh. of Westphalia, at Louvain, is so very unlike the figure before us, especially in the tail of the animal, that I cannot but consider it the paper-mark of a different manufacture.

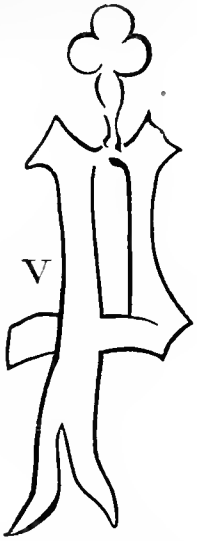


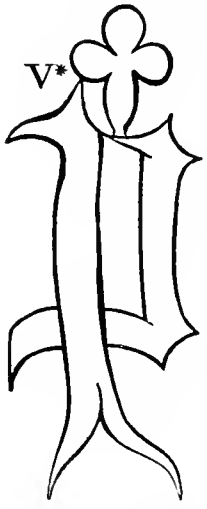
The mark, II., occurs, with slight variations, (being sometimes without the cross at top,) in Mr. Singer's copy of "the first Latin edition," on the leaves containing the cuts numbered 2. 10. 14. 19. and 41. It is represented, No. 89, in the third print in Santander's "Supplement," above-mentioned, among the paper-marks which he ascribes exclusively to Holland. It is found, he tells us, in books printed at Utrecht, by Nic. Ketelaer and Ger. de Leempt. This mark

and the following are, it is probable, the two marks of which Meerman says it is difficult to give a description.*

The mark, III., which bears so near a resemblance to the last mentioned, as to give reason to suppose that it was used by the same manufacturer, is not introduced in Santander's work. It occurs in the edition of the Speculum called "the first Latin," on the leaves containing the cuts numbered 18. 20. 24. 29. 36. 37. 38. 39. and 56.

The mark, IV., occurs once only in the first Latin edition, on the leaf containing the cut No. 53. A mark a good deal resembling it, it appears from Santander, (second print, No. 31, of the before mentioned work,) is found in books printed at Cologn, by Ulric Zell, Arnold Therhoernen, and J. Guldenschaff; in others, printed at Louvain, by Joh. of Westphalia and Conrad Braen; in others, printed at Bruxelles, by the Fratres Communis Vitæ; and also in books printed at Deventer, by R. Paffroed.

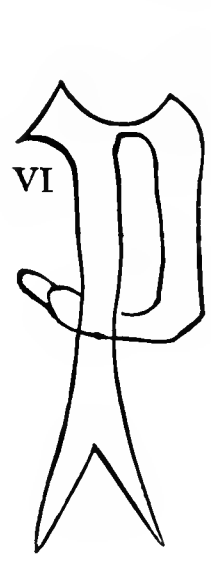


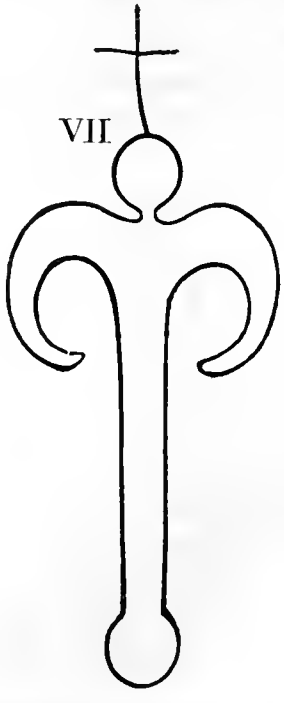


* "In principe editione Belgica," (says *Meerman* in a note, tom. i. p. 102, of his "Origines,") "chartarii signum plerumque "bubulum caput, uno loco rosam exprimit. "In altera (meo certe exemplo) plerumque "unicornu, semel bovinum caput, aliaque "etiam duo signa, quae vix describi possunt, "in folio autem singulari, ac diversi typi, "figura anchorae conspicitur. In priori editione Latina, *Fournierio*, p. 153, teste, "idem apparet caput; at in altera observavi "plerumque anchoram, quandoque unicornu." *Meerman*, however, was of the opinion, prevalent when he wrote, that no satisfactory inference could be drawn from the paper-marks of old books, and, consequently, is less particular upon this point than it is probable he otherwise would have been.

The marks V. and V*. can only be termed varieties of the same paper-mark. The mark V. occurs in the preface of the first Latin edition. V*. is found in the second Dutch edition on the leaves containing the cuts numbered 50. and 52.

This mark appears to be of frequent occurrence in books of the Low Countries. It is given by Santander, with small variations, under the Nos. 33. 34. 41. 42. 44. 52. 62. 66. 68. 78. 80. and 81.; and is found, he tells us, in books printed at Cologn, by Ulric Zell, Arnold Therhoernen, Joh. Koelhoff, Conrad de Hoemborch, and Henry Quentell; in others, printed at Louvain, by John de Westphalia and Conrad Braen; in others, printed at Bruxelles, by the Fratres Communis Vitæ; in others, printed at Alost, by Theod. Martens, and at Antwerp by Theod. Martens; also in books printed at Gouda, by Ger. Leeu; at Utrecht, by Nic. Ketelaer and Ger. de Leempt; and at Deventer, by R. Paffroed. It is also found, Santander informs us, though of somewhat smaller dimensions, in books printed at Paris, by Ulric Gering.



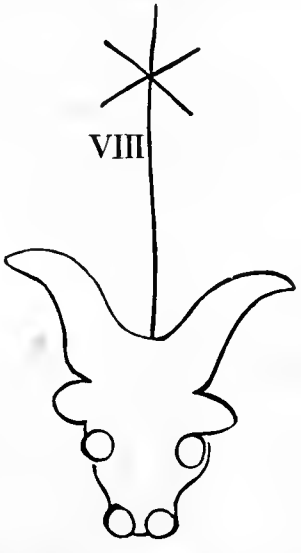


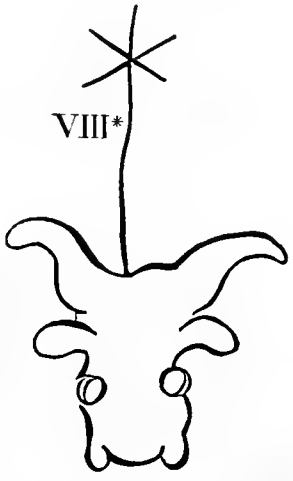
The mark VI., which nearly resembles the last-mentioned paper-mark, except that it wants the flower at top, occurs in the edition

called "the second Dutch," on the leaves containing the cuts numbered 53 and 55.

It is given, with small variations, in Santander, under the numbers 40. 65. and 67; and is, he says, found in books printed at Cologne, by Ulric Zell, Arnold Therhoernen, Conrad de Hoemborch, John Guldenschaff, Joh. Koelhoff, and Hen. Quentell; in others, printed at Louvain by John of Westphalia; at Bruxelles, by the Fratres Communis Vitæ; and at Antwerp, by Theod. Martens. It occurs, also, of smaller dimensions (as given by him under No. 93) in books printed at Deventer by R. Paffroed.

The paper-mark VII., representing an anchor, occurs in the edition called "the first Latin," on the leaves containing the cuts, Nos. 11. 12. 31. 47. 49. and 51., and is one of the marks mentioned by Meerman. It is remarkable that it is the only paper-mark found in Lord Spencer's copy of "the Book of Canticles;" where, however, it appears of somewhat smaller dimensions. Santander gives this mark, in his work above cited, under No. 51. It occurs, he tells us, in books printed at Cologne, by Ulric Zell, and Bart. de Unkel; in others, printed at Louvain, by Conrad Braen and John Veldener; and, also, in books printed at Utrecht, by Nic. Ketelaer and Ger. de Leempt.





The *tête de bœuf*, VIII., occurs in "the first Latin edition," on the

leaves containing the cuts numbered 7. 17. 22. 27. and 55. The other, VIII.* is found, in "the second Dutch edition," in the leaves containing the cuts numbered 47 and 57: they can hardly be termed distinct marks, although there is some small difference in their form.

The *tête de bœuf* with a star like this, supported by a simple upright line rising from between the horns of the animal, is given by Santander under the numbers 1. 32. 48. 64. 70. 83. and 85. with more or less variety in the shape of the animal's head; and is said by him to occur in books printed at Mentz, by Schoeffer; at Cologne, by Ulric Zell, Joh. Koelhoff, Conrad de Hoemborch, Arnold Therhoernen, and Hen. Quentell; also in books printed at Louvain, by John of Westphalia, and Conrad Braen; in others, printed at Bruxelles, by the Fratres Communis Vitæ; and in others, printed at Utrecht, by Nic. Ketelaer and Ger. de Leempt. In short, however great the varieties of the *tête de bœuf*, and however general its use as a paper-mark in the fifteenth century, it does not appear to occur, in books of the fifteenth century, with the simple ornament of a star made by cross lines, supported on an upright line, as in the above fac-similes, except in such as were printed at Mentz, (by Schoeffer,) at Cologne, or in the Low Countries.

It is worthy of observation, that the *tête de bœuf*, IX., occurs but once in the copy before us of "the second Dutch edition," as it is

called; and that it happens to be upon the leaf containing the cut No. 45—the first of the two pages which, as has been before said, are printed with type different from the rest. This curious circumstance seems to warrant the conjecture, that this edition, having been left incomplete in these two pages by one printer, was, some time afterwards, finished by another. It is also remarkable that this *tête de bœuf*, with the upright line between the horns, crossed only by one simple line, was found by Santander, (who has given it, No. 91 of the before-mentioned,) in books printed in Holland only: viz. in those printed at Utrecht by Nic. Ketelaer and Ger. de Leempt.*

The conclusion to be drawn from this combination of evidence is decisive as to the country in which the earliest editions of the Speculum Salvationis were printed. They were, without doubt, executed in Holland; and so far, therefore, the result of our enquiry does not militate against the assertions of Junius.

* Since writing the above, I have had the opportunity of examining several books of the fifteenth century, printed in Holland and other parts of the Low Countries, in the valuable library of Mr. Douce. The anchor, No. 7, occurs more frequently than any other paper-mark, in a folio of *Veldener*, printed at Louvain.—In another folio, printed by *Ger. Leeu, at Gouda*, in 1481, the marks Nos. 5* and 6, are of frequent occurrence; and in "Raymond de Sabundia," printed at Deventer by *R. Paffroed* without date, but supposed, in the *Daventr. illustr.* according to *Visser*, to have been printed previous to 1477, the paper-marks of most ordinary occurrence are those numbered 4. 5. and 6. Now we have seen that all such of the paper-marks that occur in the Speculum, as are described in Santander, are found in books of the fifteenth century, printed in Holland; and that two of them, viz. 2 and 9, are found in books printed in Holland only; and there is, therefore, upon the whole, good reason to consider the paper-marks found in the different editions of the Speculum, as more especially appertaining to Holland than to the more southern parts of Belgium. I will not omit to add, that the book last mentioned, and another, which I saw upon the same occasion, also printed by *Paffroed*, do nothing towards confirming the observation of *Fischer*, mentioned in a note at pp. 189, 190, that the type of the *Speculum* resembles that, or rather is the same, used by *R. Paffroed* at Deventer. It is possible that this printer, like many others of the early Dutch printers, may sometimes have used a broad-faced Gothic letter, a good deal resembling that of the Speculum—for the present I must be allowed to consider M. Fischer's assertion, as no other than one of those hasty observations, hazarded by memory, which the person who writes them is so often, at a future period, obliged to retract.

This fact being established, we are, in the second place, to enquire what arguments can be produced in proof of the antiquity of the work; whether such as may be drawn from the internal evidence of the book itself, or deduced from a comparison of it with other ancient volumes. Heineken, we have seen, is of opinion, that the edition of the Speculum, which he calls "the first Latin," is at least as early as 1457—Daunou places it earlier than 1460—and I am unacquainted with any bibliographical writer who has not classed it among the earliest specimens of the art of printing. If a jury of twelve men, conversant in early typography, and unprejudiced as to the question in dispute, were to be called upon to determine, whether or not this work is of at least equal antiquity with the books ornamented with wood-cuts, printed at Bamberg, in 1462, by Pfister, can any one doubt but that their answer to such a question would be in the affirmative?* and yet it will be sufficient for the purpose of shewing that the claims of Harlem are not to be got rid of so easily as the writers of the Mentz party have affected to suppose, if it can be proved that either of the four first editions of the Speculum was printed before 1472; because it is on all sides acknowledged as an established fact, that the art of printing with cast type was not practised in any part of the Low Countries (unless indeed by Coster and his successors) previous to that year, or the year following, when it is said to have been introduced into Flanders by John of Westphalia, and Theodore Martens.†

* My bibliographical friends assure me that I should certainly have a verdict upon this simple question.

† It being ascertained that the Speculum was printed in Holland, it becomes indeed scarcely necessary to prove its existence so far back as 1472, in order to disconcert the system of the writers of the Mentz party. A book, entitled "Tondalus Visionen"—*gheprent t' Antwerpen be mi Mathys Van der Goes*, bears date 1472; but this date is considered spurious, upon the ground that there is an interval of ten years between it and the next dated book of the same printer. (Vide *Lambinet*, tom. ii. p. 251.) The date of 1473, on the "Secunda Pars Hystorie "Scolastice," &c.—*Impressa in trajecto inferiori, per magistros Nycholaum Ketelaer et Gherardum de Leempt*, does not appear to be doubted; (*Lambinet*, tom. ii. p. 87.) but it may admit of a question, whether or not it was printed, as is supposed, at Utrecht.

But notwithstanding the world appears to be so far agreed upon this matter, that there is perhaps no person conversant with typographical antiquities who would hesitate to declare his belief that one at least of the four first editions of this work is anterior to the year 1472, still I am not prepared to offer positive proof that such is the case.

Next, however, to the demonstration which results from positive proof, we may class the conviction which is the consequence of that combination of small details, each corroborative of the other, and all of them pointing towards and authorizing one and the same conclusion, which is termed circumstantial evidence. Many facts

The existence of the "Jacobi de Voragine "de Gulde Legende," said to have been printed at Gouda, in 1473, by *Gheraert Leeu*, is very doubtful, (*Visser*'s Catalogue at the end of *Janson*'s book "de l'Invention "de l'Imprimerie," p. 240,) and he is thought not to have printed any book in that city until 1476 or 1477. (*Lambinet*, tom. ii. p. 262, and *Visser*, p. 245.) The dates of one or two other books, purporting to have been printed in Holland in the years 1472 and 1473, are considered spurious. Under the year 1474, *Visser* mentions no certain book printed in Holland—under 1475, but one—said to have been printed at Deventer, but without the printer's name—under 1476, he speaks of one book, *supposed* to have been printed near Gouda, and of another printed at Deventer; but both without printers' names. Under the year 1477, mention is made of the first book printed at Deventer, by R. Paffroed: and also of the two first dated books printed at Delft. The books printed at Gouda and Delft are from this period sufficiently numerous. In the year 1479, we find John Veldener printing at Utrecht, where he established himself about that time; and, under the same year, mention is made of the first dated books printed at Zwoll. In the year 1483, mention, for the first time, occurs of a dated book printed at Harlem: this book, however, seems of doubtful existence. In the same year, Veldener printed the *fifth* edition of the Speculum at the town of Culenbourg, as has been said —and also a *sixth* edition of the same work, with augmentations—likewise a book with cuts from the Bible, with verses under each print. We find no book, with a date, printed at Leyden before this year. In 1484, and the year following, we read of a few dated books, printed at Harlem; but we find no mention of any printed at Amsterdam during the fifteenth century.

Upon the whole, the number of dated books upon record, printed in Holland, previous to the year 1477, is so small, and those few are so doubtful, that it can hardly be affirmed, with certainty, that the *new school* of *printing* (if I may be allowed the expression) was established in Holland before that period. This argument is strongly insisted upon by *Meerman*, "Origines," tom. ii. p. 218, note (h).

from their very nature, are incapable of being ascertained by any other means; and the moral certitude acquired by this sort of testimony is, in some cases, so complete, as to leave little cause of regret that that kind of evidence, which can alone with propriety be termed proof, was wanting.

The present is, I think, one of these cases, and I trust the circumstances which I am now about to state, with as much brevity as possible, will be admitted as constituting together very ample ground for the conclusion that the four first editions of the Speculum Salvationis were executed previous to the year 1472 above specified.

In the first place, I must call the reader's attention to the remarks offered, in various parts of this chapter,* upon the resemblance of style observable in the execution of many of the wood-cuts of the three works which have been described—" the Biblia Pauperum," " the Book of Canticles," and the work still under consideration; a resemblance in many instances so striking, as to leave, in my opinion, no doubt that the same wood-engravers were employed upon all the three works in question. Several of the cuts in the Speculum, as has been said, appear to have been executed by the same hand that executed many of those in the " Biblia Pauperum;" others bear evident marks of having been engraved by the same workman who cut many of those in " the Book of Canticles." Nor is the resemblance as to the executive part of the work, or what we may term the handling of the graver, less apparent between many of the cuts of the " Biblia Pauperum," and several of those in " the Book of Canticles;" although the artist, who made the designs for the former of those works, appears to have been a different person from the one employed to design the latter. For example, if the reader has an opportunity of examining the 9th, 11th, 15th, 16th, 23d, 24th, 31st, 32d, 37th, and 38th cuts of the " Biblia " Pauperum," (of the edition possessed by Lord Spencer,) and of

* See pp. 142. 155. 158. 162. 165. and 169.

comparing them with the 1st, 2nd, 11th, 14th, and 16th pages of the edition of " the Book of Canticles," from which specimens have been given, he will find in the trees, represented in all of them, that peculiarity of touch in the mode of executing the foliage, (well expressed by the vulgar term *knack*) which can alone be accounted for by the supposition that they were in reality engraved by the same hand. If these, again, are compared with the cuts of the Speculum, described under Nos. 10. 12. 17. 28. 29. 30. 35. and 36., the same workmanship will be identified; insomuch that we are fully justified in the conclusion that the three works in question were executed in the work-shop of the same master wood-engraver; with the exception, as has been said, of the latter cuts of the Speculum, which are engraved in a different style from all the rest.

This being ascertained, it is evident, that if the antiquity of one of these works could be established, it would, in a considerable degree, serve us as a guide by which to form some judgment of the antiquity of the others. For, although the same artist may not unreasonably be supposed to have continued the practice of wood engraving even for more than twenty years, he can hardly be supposed to have maintained, during so long a period, the exact same style of execution; for, if we examine the productions executed by artists who are known, we shall find that a very sensible alteration, in their manner of working, took place, during even a shorter period; and often that, were it not for the cyphers affixed to their works, or the assistance we derive from the examination of their intermediate productions, it would be impossible for us, in a work executed by any artist at an early period of life, to discover that resemblance of style to one executed by the same person twenty years afterwards, as would enable us to ascertain its author.

We cannot therefore, I think, place an interval of more than ten or twelve years between the execution of the engravings of the three works in question: and, as it has been shewn that there is no ground for the belief that the cuts of the Speculum were ever intended to be

published separately from the text, it follows, that we cannot date the first edition of that work more than from ten to twelve years later than the "Biblia Pauperum;" which, from the greater rudeness of its style, we are justified in considering somewhat more ancient than the Speculum or "the Book of Canticles;" but which, notwithstanding, may not have preceded the others by so long a period as we have supposed. The cuts of "the Book of Canticles" appear to have no pretensions to a higher antiquity than the greater part of those of the Speculum, and it is probable that the engravings of those two works were in hand at the same time. The engravings of "the Book of Canticles," however, being few in number, appear to have been completed in the workshop of the master-artist who had commenced the work, whereas the latter cuts of the Speculum, as has been said, were executed by a different hand; perhaps in consequence of the original artist having died before he had completed that more extensive undertaking.*

This circumstance renders it probable that a small interval of time elapsed between the publication of "the Book of Canticles" and the first publication of the Speculum: I say but a small interval, because it is reasonable to suppose that the person for whom the engravings of the Speculum were made was employed in preparations for the text whilst the execution of the cuts was in process; and that he printed the text at the bottom of some of the cuts whilst the others were in hand.

If the correctness of Mr. Horn, as to the date upon the original binding of a copy of the "Biblia Pauperum," formerly in his possession,† be admitted; and if we could be certain that the edition of that work, so bound, was the same as that of which we have been speaking, or as that in the Bodleian Library, we should then be justified in boldly placing the publication of that work at least a few years previous to 1430; and, consequently, according to the above premises, be entitled to place the first edition of the Speculum

* See pp. 155, 156.

† See note, p. 99.

a little previous to the year 1440,* which is all that the defenders of Junius contend for. Such a chronology would perhaps be not far from the truth, and appears indeed to be necessary, if the story of Coster is to be insisted on. All, however, that I have at present undertaken to effect, is to shew good grounds for the belief that the first edition of the Speculum was printed previous to the year 1472.

I would then, in furtherance of my present object, offer the following remarks: that there is every reason to suppose that the first editions of the "Biblia Pauperum" were those printed from wooden blocks in the Latin language—that the one, of which we have given specimens, appears on every account to have at least as good claims to priority as any of the other three,† and that the circumstance of its having been engraved by the same artists who engraved the *original* edition of "the Book of Canticles," is in favor of its originality—and, lastly, that there can be no doubt that the augmented Latin edition, termed by Heineken the *fifth*, is of a much later date.‡

* It is worthy of remark, that the edition of the Speculum which we have shewn to be the FIRST, viz. that commonly called "the second Latin," was formerly considered to be so. *Heineken* makes the observation "Idée Générale," p. 449. "On donna," says he, "au commencement à Harlem cette "édition pour la première, et ce n'est que "depuis quelque tems qu'on a changé de "sentiment." The ancient belief, founded, perhaps, on tradition, was therefore the true one. It is further worth observing that the copy of this edition, which is preserved at Harlem, made part of the contents of an old chest of books which was purchased by the government of that city in the middle of the seventeenth century; and which, according to Meerman, "Origines," tom. i. p. 117, had, for a very long period, appertained to the family of Coster himself. I shall not insist on the authenticity of the printed inscription found in this copy, "*Ex Officina Laurentii Joannis Costeri, Anno* 1440"—but I submit that the circumstance of its having been anciently bound in the same volume with the first edition of "the Book of Canticles," is not a little corroborative of the opinion given in the text, that the first editions of those two works were published at nearly the same time, and at the same place.

† See pp. 129, 130.

‡ See p. 131.

If it be admitted, that the first editions of the Biblia Pauperum were in the Latin tongue, (and I think Heineken's argument that books of this kind were at first printed in their original language is incontrovertible) it follows, that as the German translation was printed at Bamberg,* by Pfister, in 1461, the Latin editions, or at least the first of those editions, must have been published some time before that period; and in truth there appears every reason to ascribe to some of them a much higher antiquity.

Of the Book of Canticles, it has been already observed that, besides the two editions of that work described by Heineken, Lambinet and Daunou mention a third edition,† a copy of which is preserved in the royal library at Paris. "This edition," says Lambinet, "is much later than the others. The text is printed on both "sides of the paper, and bears the date 1470. The figures," he adds, "appear more ancient than that epoch." Daunou, also, styles it "a posterior edition;" and there can be no doubt that such is the case: indeed the figures in the original edition of the Book of Canticles, bear so near a resemblance to the style of Van Eyck, as to justify the belief that they are full twenty or thirty years more ancient than the above epoch.‡

But the supposition that this work is of so high an antiquity, is not necessary to our present purpose: it will suffice, if it be admitted (and this cannot well be denied) that the first edition of "the Book of Canticles" was printed only a few years before the third edition. For were we to place the first edition of the work no

* See p. 135.

† See p. 141.

‡ I have now before me a print engraved by Corn. Van Noorde, and published by Enschedius, at Harlem, in 1769, from a picture of Van Eyck, bearing date 1437. It represents a young female Saint, seated on the ground, reading. She has the palm of martyrdom in her hand, and behind her are workmen employed in building the magnificent steeple of a church. The little figures of the workmen preparing the masonry under a shed adjoining the building, bear considerable resemblance to the small figures in the back-ground of the first cut of the Book of Canticles.

earlier than 1465, and admit that five years elapsed between that publication and the first publication of the Speculum, which is a longer interval than there is any reason to suppose really took place between them, the Speculum must then have been published in the year 1470—that is, two or three years before the first dated books printed in any part of the Low Countries; which is all that we have, at present, undertaken to establish.

The mode in which the typographical part of the Speculum is executed in the four first editions of that work, furnishes further evidence of its antiquity, as will presently be more fully shewn. It is not credible that John of Westphalia, Theodore Martens, John Veldener, Ger. Leeu, or any of the printers of the fifteenth century, who are said to have introduced the art of printing into Flanders and Holland, in its mature and perfect state, should have departed from their usual method of typography in the execution of the editions in question. All the numerous books, with wood-cuts, published during the last twenty-eight years of the fifteenth century by these printers, of which we have any account, are executed in the usual way; the cuts, like the text, being printed on both sides of the paper, with black printing-ink and a press.

Still less can it be believed that one of these persons, supposing him to have printed the first edition of the Speculum (commonly called the second Latin edition) should afterwards have completed two pages of the second edition of the work (the second Dutch, as it is called) with an old worn out and battered type, unlike the rest, and wholly unfit for use;—that, after having printed this edition in the Dutch language, he should have published a second edition in Latin, partly printed with cast type, and partly with wooden blocks; and lastly, that he should have put forth another Dutch edition, printed, if we can judge from Meerman's account of it, with a worse type than the former, and inferior ink. It will suffice to call the reader's attention to one additional cir-

cumstance, in order to convince him of the extreme improbability, I might almost say impossibility, that either of the four early editions of the Speculum should have been printed by any one of the printers above alluded to. Upon an examination of the margins of the printed columns of text, in both the prose editions of the work, (the Dutch) he will discover that the printer, when he set up the type, was wholly unacquainted with the art of spacing out the vacancies between the words, as it is technically called, by means of small blank pieces of metal of different thicknesses, so as to make the lines of an equal length: in consequence of which, the right-hand edge of each column has a ragged and uneven appearance; a defect in the setting of the types never to be found, as I am informed, except in books printed in the very infancy of the art.*

There is, therefore, upon the whole, abundant evidence to shew: *first*—that THE ORIGINAL EDITION OF THE SPECULUM WAS PRINTED IN HOLLAND; and, *secondly*—that IT WAS PRINTED BEFORE THE YEAR 1472: and it will, consequently, remain for those who shall still withhold their assent to the testimony of Junius, to account

* The library of my friend, Mr. Douce, being eminently rich in the early printed books of the Low Countries, I requested him to have the goodness to let me know whether the same inequalities in the length of the lines, which I noticed in the Dutch Speculum, were to be found in any of them.—Mr. Douce informs me, in answer, "that he has examined all the early books which he possesses, printed in the Low Countries, and that all of them have the edges of the type perfectly even, according to the rules of good press-work; and not with chasms like the Speculum, which," he observes, "certainly indicate printing in its *earliest and rudest* state." The Bible supposed to have been printed by Gutenberg, and the Psalter of 1457, have also, I learn from Mr. Dibdin, the edges of the type perfectly in register. It is to be observed, that the printed columns of the Speculum are all of them very well in register on the *left* margin—so that the defect mentioned in the text, cannot be ascribed to the printer's want of care or accuracy; but is only to be accounted for by the supposition, that the improved method of spacing out the lines so as to make them of an equal length, had not yet been thought of when the book was printed, or at least that it was entirely unknown to the printer of the Speculum.

for the existence of a work, of which we have four ancient editions, neither of them capable of being classed amongst ancient books printed in Germany, nor among the productions of those printers who practised the art of typography in various parts of the Low Countries, after the example of Theodore Martens and John of Westphalia. This they will probably find no easy task; and, at all events, they will not be able to accomplish it without admitting the fallacy of so many of their former opinions and doctrines, that it were as creditable for them to give up the point at once, or at least to acknowledge that, after all, there may be more foundation for the story of Laurence Coster than they were aware of.

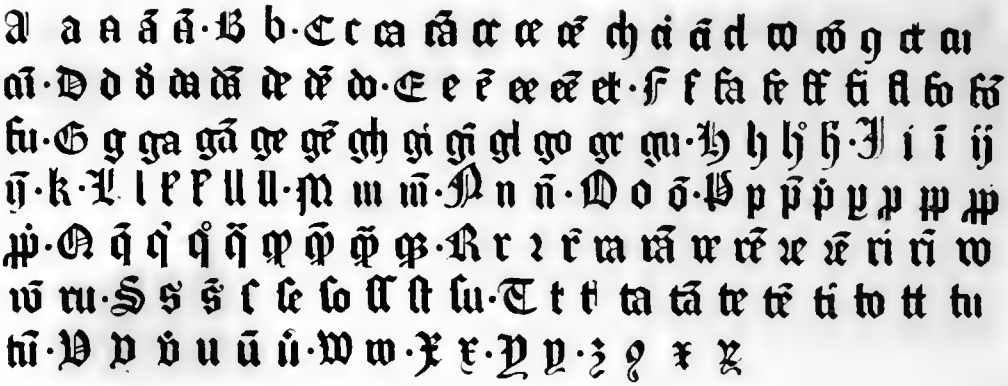
It has already been stated that, except twenty pages of the text, in one of the Latin editions,* the four early editions of the Speculum were printed with moveable characters; that, in three of the editions, the type is identically the same, and that it is CAST TYPE. But although this last-mentioned fact, I hesitate not to say, is certain, there have been, notwithstanding, so many contradictory opinions respecting the type of the Speculum, that it cannot be termed uncontroverted. I therefore think it necessary to offer a few remarks on the subject; and that they may be rendered more intelligible to the reader, I prefix a fac-simile, shewing the numerous pieces that type is composed of; which have been collected together with no small pains, during a frequent examination of the text in the two editions called "the second Dutch," and "the first Latin."†

It would be, perhaps, improper to term this a fac-simile of the printer's *alphabet;* since by far the greater number of the pieces represented, are either double letters, or accompanied by marks

* The pages of the "first Latin edition," as it is called, which are printed from wooden blocks, are those containing the cuts numbered 1. 2. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 13. 14. 16. 17. 21. 22. 26. 27. 46. and 55.

† I shall afterwards speak of the different type used, as before observed, in two pages of the edition called "the second Dutch."

of abbreviation, signifying that they stand for whole syllables, or, in some cases, for entire words. I have been unable to discover a capital K, either in the Latin or the Dutch edition of the work.



Any person conversant with printing, upon first viewing the Speculum, naturally determines that, except the twenty pages of block-printing so often noticed, in one of the Latin editions, it was printed with *cast metal type*. Upon a more attentive examination of a page, however, he discovers small, but yet, sometimes, very evident variations of form in different specimens of the same letter, which it appears difficult to account for: he finds, perhaps, by measurement, that the same word, although spelt exactly in the same manner, does not always occupy exactly the same space; and he is induced to hesitate as to the correctness of his first judgment: if not, indeed, to abandon it entirely, as not bearing the test of scrutiny. In the latter case, he either attaches himself to those who, like Fournier and Meerman, considered the Speculum to have been printed with separate characters, carved in wood; or is obliged to conclude, that the type used for the occasion was prepared by the

painful and tedious operation of cutting each individual character, on a separate piece of metal, by the hand.*

Having embraced either of these two opinions, he finds, in the work before him, ample cause for his admiration of the invincible patience, the skill, and the exactness of the artist, who could suc-

* Meerman, latterly, thought of a third method, in which he supposed the shafts of the types to have been cast, and the letters to have been cut by the hand. "Origines," tom. ii. p. 51. He does not, however, appear to have ascribed this method to Coster, but to the first Mentz printers; so that my note, at p. 197, may require correction. I was led into the error by a misapplication of the following passage in Heineken, "Idée Générale," pp. 259-60. note (b) "Plusieurs auteurs," says Heineken, "ont "compris enfin l'impossibilité d'imprimer "avec des lettres mobiles de bois. Ils ont "donc imaginé un autre genre, pour ex- "pliquer l'inégalité des caractères dans ces "livres dont nous parlons. Ils ont produit "à cette fin des lettres mobiles, sculptées de "bronze. Mais par malheur elles ren- "contrent encore plus de difficulté que celles "de bois; outre que la matière en est plus "dure, elles demandent encore un tems in- "fini à être sculptées. M. *Meerman* enfin, "pour sauver quelques circonstances, établies "par lui, pour prouver l'existence de l'im- "primerie de *Laurent Coster*, a inventé une "troisième espèce de lettres. Il fait fondre "le corps dans des moules ou matrices, pour "qu'elles deviennent égales, et ensuite il "fait tailler la lettre au bout à la main et au "couteau. Mais quand on est venu jusqu'à "fondre le corps, il faut être bien imbé- "cille, pour ne pas fondre aussi la lettre. "Disons plutôt la vérité, d'autant plus qu'on "rencontre même dans les livres les plus ir- "régulièrement imprimés, toujours quelques "marques, qui décèlent la fonte de lettres, "et avouons sincèrement, que tous les livres "imprimés, le sont, ou avec des lettres "fixes, gravées sur bois, ou avec des lettres "de fonte." I will not go the length of Heineken, in supposing that separate characters of wood were never used in printing, because it is not probable that an opinion, so prevalent as that of the ancient use of such characters was, in the sixteenth century, should have had no foundation. For letters of considerable dimensions, such as the larger characters of the Psalter of 1457, they might have been found to answer, and were, perhaps, employed on account of the cheapness of the material: the initial letters of that volume were, it appears certain, printed in that manner. But for the printing of text of ordinary dimensions, like that of the Speculum, separate wooden characters could never have been applied with success. The unsuccessful specimen of two or three words printed in that manner in the first volume of Meerman's work, is, of itself, an answer to this part of his system; and ought to have induced him to listen to his friend Enschedius, the printer, who, as he himself confesses, tom. ii. p. 225, insisted, after repeated examinations, that all the editions of the Speculum, not even excepting that which Meerman calls the first Dutch, were printed with cast type.

ceed, not only in giving to the sculptured characters that general uniformity of appearance, which at first occasioned him to consider them as cast out of moulds, but even so strict a resemblance between perhaps a dozen specimens of the same letter in the first six lines of a page, as to baffle the exertions of the most correct eye to detect any sensible difference between them: except such as must necessarily occur even in the ordinary method of printing with cast type; either in consequence of one letter happening to have been more used and worn than another, more charged with the printing ink, or, from an irregularity not unfrequent in ordinary press-work, forced deeper into the surface of the paper than the rest.

If, however, he turns from the page which he has been examining, to one of those printed from a wooden block, he will be convinced, by the comparison, that the uniformity of appearance which he witnessed in the characters of the former, could not have been produced by means similar to those used in the execution of the latter: for in the page printed from the engraved block, he will discover, throughout, a sensible difference of form, as well as dimensions, between all the various repetitions of the same letter; and in the capital letters, especially, he will find this difference so material, as to render it easy for him to trace with a point the precise variations of form by which, for example, each of a dozen letters, S, is to be distinguished from all the others. And yet it cannot but occur to him, that it must have been a task of less difficulty to preserve uniformity in the shapes and dimensions of the letters, in a page of text engraved on a plain block of wood, which would have afforded the artist not only the means of a constant comparison, but also a convenient and steady rest for his hand during the operation of engraving, than it could have been to cut the numerous characters required with so strict a resemblance to each other, on separate pieces of wood or metal. His second opinion he will find, therefore, to be subject to at least as many objections as his first one; and, if he do

not carry his investigations further, he must be satisfied to rest in doubt and uncertainty.

The first time I saw a copy of the Speculum, which chanced to be of the edition called "the first Latin," my own opinion underwent, in rapid succession, the changes above described. From the coup d'œil of the first page of the preface, I was persuaded that it was printed with cast type; but, my attention being called to a more minute examination, I discovered a perceptible variation of form, and even, as I thought, of dimension, in some of the repetitions of the same letter. The capital P for example, at the beginning of the thirteenth line, did not appear to me exactly the same as that which commences the twentieth line; the same letter, at the beginning of the twenty-fourth line, appeared to have a black line closing it in at top, in which it differed from the two former; and I thought I saw small differences between these three, and the two specimens of the same letter, at the beginning of the thirty-third and thirty-seventh lines, which, however minute, were, I conceived, sufficient to oppose the idea of their having been cast in the same mould. Upon examining the minuscules, I perceived, here and there, the marks of a sharp instrument, and I became of the opinion that they had been executed, not, indeed, on wood, but on pieces of metal, by means of the graver: until, turning to one of the pages printed from an engraved block, and seeing the comparative imperfection of resemblance in the same letters, I was forced to relinquish my latter opinion, as on every account, to the full as untenable as my former one.

It would be tedious to the reader to follow me through the many examinations by which I at length succeeded, in convincing myself that the judgment, which I had at first formed, was just, and that the work was indeed printed with cast type; more especially as it was not until after I had been some time firmly persuaded of that fact, that I discovered such evidence as was of a nature to be particularized by description, and thereby communicated to others.

It may seem scarcely necessary to say any thing, in addition to

what has already been said, in proof that the type used in the different editions of the Speculum was moveable. The impressions of the blank characters, perceptible in some places in the vacant parts of the pages, and before noticed, are decisive as to that point; and the fact, moreover, is generally admitted. Nevertheless, as I happen to have discovered an additional piece of evidence, in proof that such was the case, I shall briefly state it.

The subjects of most of the cuts in the Speculum, are taken, as we have seen, from Scripture; and as, at the bottom of each column of text, the printer states the book and chapter in which the story represented above it is contained, these references, by furnishing frequent repetitions of the same word, offer an easy mode of detecting those venial errors of orthography to which press-work is so liable; and which, when they are found in words of common use, in the vernacular tongue of the printer, constitute the best possible evidence of the mobility of the types used upon the occasion; as they cannot be accounted for, like the errors noticed at p. 140, in one of the editions of "the Book of Canticles," upon the ground of the workman's ignorance; but must have been occasioned by the compositor happening, accidentally, to insert one character instead of another, when re-setting the word.

The word *capittel*, chapter, in the Dutch edition, occurs twice at the bottom of almost every page of the book; sometimes abbreviated, but generally spelt at length. At the bottom of the column under the cut representing "Naaman cured of his leprosy," No. 24, this word is spelt *carittel*, the compositor having by mistake introduced an *r* instead of a *p*; under that of "Naomi weeping the "death of her sons," No. 50; it is spelt thus; *capittél*,—the *e*, by mistake, having an accent over it—an error which nowhere else occurs; and at the bottom of the text, under the cut of "God com- "manding Abraham to leave the land of Ur," No. 54, the word is spelt thus—*capistel*; the printer, in his hurry, having mistaken the double letter *st* for the double *tt*.

There is therefore no doubt that the characters used in the differ-

ent editions of the Speculum (except twenty pages in one of the Latin editions) were moveable types; and I now proceed to produce what I trust will be admitted as satisfactory evidence, that these types were cast. In order, however, that this evidence may be clearly understood, it will be proper, in the first place, to offer a few remarks concerning the mode supposed to have been used by the inventors of printing, in preparing their type.

The operation by which the casting of letters was effected during the infancy of typography was very different from the process now used in letter-foundries, and far less perfect. The first cast type is believed to have been made by pouring melted lead, pewter, or other metal, into moulds of earth, or plaister, formed, whilst the earth or plaister was in a moist state, upon letters cut by the hand in wood or metal; in the ordinary manner used from time immemorial, in bell-founding, and in casting statues of bronze and other articles of metal, whether for use or for ornament. The mould thus formed could not be of long duration like a matrix cut or stamped in metal, since it was obviously subject to fracture; nor could it be equally true or perfect in other respects, as it was liable to warp in drying.

From moulds thus constructed, but a small number of specimens of each letter could be taken, before they would require to be renewed. This, it is reasonable to suppose, was effected by forming new moulds upon the various specimens of the characters which had been cast out of the old ones. Those characters, however, before they could have been fit for use, it had been necessary to clear, by means of the graver, from the small particles of extraneous metal left upon them in the process of casting; so that the small accidental dissimilarities in the different specimens of each letter, originally occasioned by this imperfect mode of casting them, were necessarily augmented by the after-process of finishing or clearing them with a sharp instrument; and thus the renewed moulds, formed upon the letters thus prepared, would necessarily differ, and in some cases very materially, from the former ones, and also (for these

moulds could be multiplied at pleasure) from each other. That a book, printed with type thus manufactured, should present a never ending variety in the forms of the different specimens of the same letter, is, therefore, not surprizing; it is rather a subject for our admiration, that the dissimilarity in the characters in the work before us, is not greater, and more immediately apparent.

This necessary variety in the appearance of the characters, in books printed with type made by the above process, renders it extremely difficult to prove, from a comparison of those characters, that such books were, in reality, printed with cast type at all; and, indeed, a French writer, whom we have often cited, says, in speaking of the larger sized type of the Psalter of 1457, "that he thinks "it impossible to pronounce whether those characters, wherein," says he, "so many inequalities and variations in the same letters "have been observed, were cut in wood, or cast in moulds of clay "or plaister, seeing that these two processes, although different, "would give the same result of inequality and disproportion; as "may be seen," says he, "in multiplied examples in the history of "printing by stereotype."*

Notwithstanding, however, that the remark of Lambinet, as to the difficulty of distinguishing, by the impression, between carved type, and such as was cast by the imperfect method above described, and afterwards finished by the hand, is not wholly unfounded; still I am of opinion, that if due diligence be used in the examination, such a distinction will, in most cases, not be found impossible. Besides the smaller varieties of form in the letters, commonly to be found in books printed with type prepared by the ancient mode of casting, the marks of accidental fractures or distortions of a more obvious kind will sometimes be discovered in particular letters; occasioned, perhaps, by some fracture or distortion which the mould, out of which that particular letter was cast, had encountered whilst drying. If, notwithstanding such an imperfection of the mould,

* Lambinet, tom. ii. p. 314.

several letters were cast out of it, (which, in the infancy of typography, would probably be the case, if the fracture was not of such a magnitude as to render the letters cast from it wholly unfit for use) each of those letters would retain peculiar marks, by which it might be distinguished from other specimens of the same letter that had been cast out of moulds which were free from such defects; even notwithstanding the after-process of clearing the letters from the superfluous metal left upon them in casting, which, in the type of the Speculum, at least, appears to have been hastily performed by a sharp instrument. Now, as in the mode of casting above-mentioned, a sufficient quantity of type for printing could only be obtained by moulds often renewed upon the characters before cast, it would occasionally happen that the renewed moulds would be formed upon letters which, having themselves been cast out of fractured or distorted moulds, retained the marks of such imperfection; and thus the traces of the original accident would descend, if I may use the expression, to a large portion of the specimens of that particular character; more especially if the original accident occurred at an early period of the operation of preparing the type.

A remarkable accident of this kind appears to have occurred during the process of casting the type used for the Speculum; and as it furnishes, in its effect, very sufficient evidence of its origin, I shall here describe it. Among the characters of common occurrence in Lord Spencer's Dutch copy, is the following . It is not so often found in the edition called "the first Latin:" that language not admitting so frequently of its introduction. This character, in its perfect shape above represented, occurs in the 30th line of the first page of the preface of the Dutch edition, and is repeated, with small variations in its appearance, in the same line, and in the 10th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 18th, 21st, 27th, and 32d lines of the same page. But it is remarkable that, in most instances, as well in this page as in other parts of the book, it appears with the marks of fracture or dislocation, in the line of abbreviation over the letter,

thus, ñ: whence there appears reason to conclude that the original fracture or warping of the mould, occurred at an early period of the process of casting the type. In some instances, as, for example, in the 4th line of the right-hand column of text, under the cut No. 18, the mark of abbreviation over this letter, appears broken into two distinct pieces, thus, ñ; (an accident which, perhaps, happened to the letter after casting, in the course of its use, in consequence of the weakness of the type in that part) whilst, in others, on the contrary, the indication of the original dislocation of the mould is scarcely perceptible.

The above circumstances not only furnish satisfactory proof that the type of the Speculum was cast, but, also, that it is identically the same in two, at least, of the editions of the work: for the same marks of dislocation, in the line of abbreviation over the letter which we have noticed, are found in several places in the edition called "the first Latin;" as in the first page of the preface, at the 31st, 35th, 36th, and 38th lines; in the fourth page, at the 30th and 32d lines; in the column of text on the right-hand, under the 30th cut, at the 6th, 10th, 17th, 19th, 22d, and 24th lines; and in many other parts of the volume: nor have I any doubt that, upon examination, the same defects in this particular letter will be discovered in the first edition of the Speculum, hitherto called, "the second Latin," which, as has been already observed, there is every reason to conclude was printed with the same type.

By similar means it may, probably, hereafter be ascertained, that the fragment of a Donatus, which was discovered at Harlem in the binding of a book of accounts of the year 1474,* and of which a

* This fragment, which is printed on vellum, was found attached to the binding of a book of accounts of the church of Harlem, written entirely in the year 1474; and it is remarkable that the MS. contains an entry, in which mention is made of *Cornelius* the book-binder. *Meerman* calls this the third edition of the Donatus, and supposes that it was printed, by the successors of Coster, a little before 1474. Upon this point, it may be sufficient to observe, that he appears to have had no better authority for his chrono-

page is copied in plate VI* of Meerman's work, was also printed with the same characters; a fact which, if it be established, will, by a fair inference, greatly strengthen the cause of Harlem, by shewing the probability that, according to ancient tradition, the early editions of the Speculum were really printed in that city.

Whether or not the *Fragmentum Doctrinalis Alexandri Galli*, two leaves of parchment in 4to. mentioned by Fischer, and noticed in a note at p. 190 of this work, was printed with the same characters, and whether or not that fragment is identically the same which is ascribed, in Visser's catalogue, to the press of the successors of Coster, I cannot determine. Lord Spencer has lately made the acquisition of four leaves of vellum, of a small 4to size—part of an edition hitherto unknown of the *Catonis Disticha*—which was certainly printed with the type used for the Speculum, notwithstanding that, in consequence of the shrinking of the vellum, the characters appear of somewhat smaller dimensions. A full page

logical arrangement of the different Donatuses, than he had for the different editions of the Speculum, in his arrangement of which it has been shewn he was egregiously mistaken. The fragment above-mentioned, therefore, may perhaps be much older than 1474. I regret that we are not informed whether or not this fragment, when it was discovered, exhibited any marks of having been itself part of a book which had been bound and used, previous to its being applied to the purpose of assisting in the binding of the account book of 1474.

This interesting fragment was not discovered until after Meerman's laborious work was very far advanced. He speaks of it, tom. ii. p. 218, in a long note, (already referred to at p. 229,) from which I extract the following passage:—"Imo, quum probabile "non sit," says Meerman, "folium hoc petitum ex editione apud exteros impressa, "quae in bibliopegi usum mutilata fuerit, sed "potius, residua aut inutilia folia libelli "isthic loci excusi eam in rem inserviisse, "concludere porro licet, eum prodiise ex "officina Laurentiana Harlemi, quandoquidem a. 1474. Nulla adhuc alia per totam "Hollandiam erecta erat, quum scholae Martinianae alumni demum a. 1477. Delphis "et Goudae (non vero a. 1473, ut falso "scripsit *Marchantius* 'Hist. de l'Imprim.' "p. 62.) Harlemi vero demum a. 1484, libros "vulgaverint; queis adde, quod in officina "Laurentiana ministri quondam partes ipse "egisset Cornelius. Sed dubium omne eximit conformitas cum typis *Speculi Belgici* "secundae editionis maxima, quae mihi aliisque, ambo archetypa cum cura conferentibus, statim sese manifestavit," &c.

contains twenty-one lines. The ñ exhibiting the marks of fracture or dislocation, in the horizontal line of abbreviation over it, more or less apparent, occurs in the last line of the 1st page, in the 9th line of the 4th page, and in the 7th line of the 8th page. In the 4th line of the 2d page, in the 15th of the 3d page, and in the 9th and 11th lines of the 8th page, the same character occurs, but without any marks of the imperfection so often noticed. I understand it to be the intention of Mr. Dibdin, to present his readers with the fac-simile of an entire page of this interesting fragment, in the fourth volume of his "Bibliotheca Spenceriana."

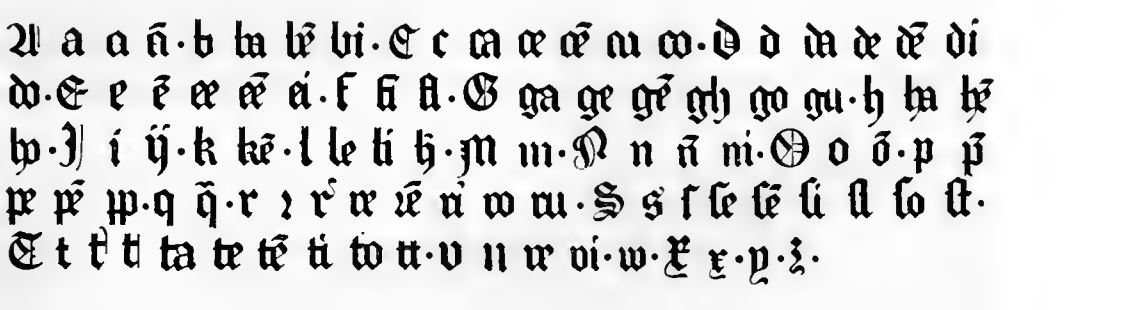
In my endeavours to show that the type of the Speculum was cast type, I have referred to a particular defect of frequent occurrence in the same letter, because I considered that evidence, of itself, decisive of the question, at the same time that it was easy of communication. I will only add that, independent of this proof, any person of a correct eye will, upon an attentive comparison of the different specimens of any one letter, in any page of the book, (except the twenty pages of block-printing, in one of the Latin editions) discover abundant and convincing evidence that such was the case.

If the type of the Speculum be compared with the types of other early printed books, it will, I believe, be found to be more abundant in ligatures than any other, of equal dimensions, known to have been used in the Low Countries, or perhaps elsewhere, during the fifteenth century. This circumstance is strongly favourable to the antiquity of the work. For the inconvenience arising from the too frequent use of types, each containing two letters, a practice which was probably resorted to in the infancy of typography, that the printed book might resemble the work of the caligraphist, and thus pass for manuscript, occasioned them by degrees to be more sparingly used after the art was no longer a secret; especially in books printed with characters of a large size; as by the diminution of the number of pieces employed, the expense and labour of preparing the type was greatly diminished.

To this it may be added, that the type of the Speculum is very remarkable for its heaviness of appearance; the dark strokes of the characters being thicker in proportion to the dimensions of the letters than is the case in the types ascribed to Guttenberg, in those of Fust and Schoeffer, or perhaps in those of any other ancient printer. This peculiarity in the type of the Speculum was, it is probable, necessarily occasioned by the nature of the material used for its construction; which, from the general want of sharpness in the appearance of the letters, and the frequent fractures and zigzag bendings in the fine strokes of some of them—the capital I in particular—there seems reason to believe was pewter, or some other soft metallic composition, ill calculated to resist the force of the press, unless in characters of thick and heavy proportions. If this conclusion be well founded, it will be admitted as in no small degree corroborative of the testimony of Junius.

It remains for us to say a few words concerning the difference between this type, and that with which two pages only of "the "second Dutch edition," as it is called, are printed; viz. the 45th and the 56th.

The form of this latter type, so far as the two above-mentioned pages furnish the alphabet, are given in the annexed fac-simile:



This type differs considerably from that used in the other parts of the work; not only in the forms of several of its letters—the capital A, for example, and the capital D—but also in its size: twenty-seven

lines of text in these two pages occupying nearly the same space as twenty-five lines in the other pages of the volume. It is also remarkable, that some letters are found joined to others following them, in this type, which never occur so joined in the other; as the consonants b and h, for example, followed by the vowels a, e, and i. The ink, moreover, used in printing these two pages, is browner, and appears to have been more diluted with oil,* than that used in other parts of the work, and the paper is thinner and of an inferior quality. But it is especially worthy of notice, that this type, when applied to the purpose of completing these two pages of the Dutch edition, appears to have been in much worse condition than the other type; and, indeed, it bears the marks of having suffered so much from previous hard usage,† as to render it difficult to believe that the printer would have resorted to it, upon the present occasion, had he had any other. The only reasonable hypothesis therefore that I am able to frame, by which to account for these two pages being printed in a manner so inferior to the rest, and the still more extraordinary introduction of twenty pages of block-printing in the Latin edition so often mentioned, is, that the printer who printed the FIRST EDITION of the Speculum (called "the second Latin,") left, upon his death, the SECOND EDITION, (hitherto styled "the second Dutch,") and the THIRD EDITION (erroneously called "the first Latin,") incomplete; that the type which had been used for those editions having been stolen or destroyed, shortly previous to the death of such printer, or perhaps soon after his decease, his successor, natu-

* In this respect, these two pages appear to bear a resemblance to those of the edition which Meerman calls "the first Dutch," which are printed, he tells us, with browner and more oleaginous ink than the other editions, a circumstance which is in favor of my opinion, that that edition was afterwards printed by the same person who had completed the two pages of the other.

† I am not aware that any fragment or book, printed with the type used in the two pages above-mentioned, has hitherto been discovered. From the battered appearance of the character, one might almost conjecture that it had been made of *lead*—the material of which, according to Junius, Coster made his type, before he discovered that pewter, from its being somewhat harder, was better fitted for the purpose.

rally desirous to make the most of the property which he had inherited, lost no time in completing the text of the two pages wanting in the Dutch edition, by having recourse to the remains of some old type which had been thrown aside by his predecessor as no longer fit for use; but that finding the imperfections of this old type, of which he, probably, possessed but a small quantity, and being himself unequal to the task of casting new, (an art which whether from his youth or other causes he had not been sufficiently instructed in during the life-time of him from whom he* inherited,) he was obliged, in order to complete the twenty pages wanting in the Latin edition, to have recourse to one of the numerous artists who, long previous to, as well as after, the invention of typography, practised engraving in wood.

The rude manner of printing used in completing the two last mentioned editions of the Speculum, can only be accounted for by the supposition that, at the time and place in which they were published, the art of typography, which had been shortly before practised with good prospect of success, although still in its infancy, had, by some strange mishap, experienced a check which little less than

* Thomas Peter, the son-in-law of Coster, and who assisted him in his invention, is supposed to have died before him, leaving sons, the eldest of whom could not, according to the genealogical account of the family given by Meerman, have been more than twenty years of age, when Coster himself died: an event which, it is believed, took place about the year 1440. This young man, therefore, although his youth was not such as to render it likely that he was entirely ignorant of the art which his grandfather and his father had heretofore practised, could scarcely have possessed more than an incomplete acquaintance with it, when, upon the death of Coster, he was called upon to take the management of the new establishment; and consequently when, by the robbery, which (judging from the account of Guicciardini) took place shortly after that period, he found himself suddenly deprived, not only of the necessary type for printing, but also of the services of, perhaps, his grandfather's best workman, it can neither be a matter of surprize that he was obliged to complete the second and third editions of the Speculum, in the rude manner that has been described; nor that he was unable, in the fourth edition of the work, published, perhaps, a few years after these, to equal that part of the press-work of the former editions which had been before executed under the care and inspection of Coster himself.

occasioned its immediate destruction, and greatly impeded its progress for the time to come. That this was the case appears evident from the other Dutch edition, which there is reason to believe was printed the last of the four, (and probably some time after the last mentioned Latin edition,) but which Meerman erroneously styles the first: this edition, although it is printed with moveable, and, no doubt, cast type, being executed, according to Meerman's description of it, in a manner so inferior to the others as to prove that the printer who executed it was far less perfectly skilled in the different secrets of the art he practised,* than he was by whom the first edition had perhaps many years before been published.

Upon the whole, the conclusions to be drawn from the examination and comparison of the four early editions of the Speculum, appear incompatible with any system of typographical history, except such as has for its basis the ancient traditions recorded by

* This inferiority of talent or diligence in those who appear to have immediately succeeded Coster in the practice of the *secret* art which he had invented, sufficiently accounts for the silence of the old writers respecting early printing at Harlem. Their poor attempts were little calculated to draw forth the notice of contemporaneous historians, even had they been known, which for some time, it is probable, was not the case. The printers of Mentz, meanwhile, were eminently successful in their endeavours to perfect the art of printing, and soon put forth works which, from their magnitude as well as the beauty of their execution, could not fail to occasion the admiration of all Europe. Through their means also the knowledge of the art became diffused. It is therefore rather a matter of surprize, that even one of the writers of the fifteenth century (the author of the Cologne Chronicle) should have noticed the pretensions of Harlem, than that so many should have been silent respecting them. It appears highly probable that the rude method of printing used by the successors of Coster, continued to be practised in Harlem, and perhaps in some other parts of Holland, until some time after the establishment of the more perfect mode of typography introduced into the Low Countries by Theod. Martens and John of Westphalia; a supposition which, if it be admitted, will in some degree account for the disciples of the Mentz printers not having established their presses in Holland and Flanders so early as in most other parts of Europe. The number of books rudely printed in the Low Countries, without dates, seems to justify the hypothesis: besides that, it is extremely improbable that an art of this kind, once practised, in any province, however imperfectly, should afterwards have fallen into entire oblivion and disuse.

Van Zuyren, Coornhert, Junius, and Guicciardini; with which they perfectly accord. And I therefore am constrained to give my assent to the testimony of these writers; corroborated, as it appears to be, by so many striking particulars of circumstantial evidence, and especially confirmed by the internal evidence of the Speculum itself, the monument to which Junius refers.

But, although such be the conviction of my own mind, I do not flatter myself that it will be admitted by others that I have satisfactorily determined this long disputed question. The ultimate establishment of Coster's pretensions, I leave to those who have leisure for so arduous a task; and who, if those pretensions be well founded, may, at some future period, armed, perhaps, with evidence, the existence of which is at present unknown, wrest back the long usurped wreath, to place it once more on the brows of its rightful owner.

Some apology is necessary for my having devoted so many pages to the discussion of a question, which the reader may have considered foreign to the professed object of this work: more especially as it may be urged against me that, in going so much at length into the pretensions of Lawrence Coster, I have shewn myself little mindful of my promise, at the beginning of this chapter, to keep as clear as possible from all typographical controversy.

If the example of others may be pleaded in my justification, it will be enough to refer to Papillon, Fournier, and, more particularly, to Heineken, who devoted two hundred and thirty pages of his "Idée Générale," to an account of the early block-books, intermingled with his opinions concerning the invention of typography; although his work was expressly written upon the mode of arranging a collection of prints.

The early history of wood engraving is, indeed, so closely interwoven with that of printing, that an inquiry into the former, must necessarily occasion some mention of the latter; and where it so happens that documents or opinions of authority respecting the one art, appear to be at variance with such as relate to the other, the

examination of those on both sides, becomes essential to our forming a right judgment concerning the points in dispute.

From the respectful deference that has been paid to Heineken by more recent authors, his writings have, by degrees, assumed an air of authority to which they have certainly not an indisputable title; but which, nevertheless, has rendered it necessary that I should be the more particular in defending, by argument or evidence, those opinions in which I chanced to differ from him. These, as has been seen, were not a few; and I have consequently been obliged to combat his system in detail—feeling that, if I did not succeed in making out a strong case, I should incur the reproach of imbecile presumption, in daring to call in question the truth of doctrines familiarized by frequent repetition, and long sanctioned by the learned. After all, the discussion concerning Coster would not have had a place in this work, but for the accidental discovery of the priority of the two editions of the Speculum, which had hitherto been considered the third and fourth editions of that work. This discovery appeared to put the question in a new light, and led me into further research; and I am willing to flatter myself that, however my argument upon the subject may be found defective, some of the facts upon which it is founded, and which have been unnoticed by all former writers, will be deemed not uninteresting by those who are curious in typographical antiquities. I have purposely avoided the mention of such testimonies on the side of Holland as appear of dubious authority,—as that recorded by Atkins; and I have omitted to notice others of inferior import. In short, I leave the subject open to future discussion; satisfying myself with having proved that, according to my original position, the cuts of the three block-books described in this chapter, appertain to the ancient school of the Low Countries, and not to that of Germany.

Before we close this chapter, and, with it, our inquiry concerning the antiquity of wood engraving, it may be proper briefly to reca-

pitulate some of the principal documents of the early use of that art, that have been referred to in the preceding pages.

The earliest document of the practice of this art in Europe, is that recorded by Papillon, of the wood-cuts of "the Actions of Alexander," engraved by the two Cunio, at Ravenna, and dedicated by them to their kinsman, Pope Honorius IV. about the year 1285. It is unnecessary to add to the reasons, given in our first chapter, which have induced us to place reliance upon the French writer's accuracy in describing this interesting monument of ancient xylography, now no longer to be found.

It cannot be denied that the distance between this epoch and the protective decree of 1441, of the government of Venice, is formidable. Nor should we have placed it next in the order of time, did not the context of that record furnish undoubted proof that the art of wood engraving had been commonly practised, not only in Venice, but also in other parts of Europe, very long previous to its date. The decree, indeed, as has been observed in our second chapter, speaks of the art of manufacturing cards and printed figures, in terms which would have been every way appropriate, had it had for its object the re-establishment of the most ancient manufacture of Venice. I have suggested that we may, in some degree, fill up the chasm between the epoch of the two Cunio, and that of the decree of Venice, by the most early records of the general use of playing-cards in Europe: because I think* that cards could never have been general in any European country, until the art of wood engraving was resorted to in their manufacture: as the time and labour required to design and colour them by the hand, must have rendered them too expensive an amusement, except for the most opulent classes of society, and, consequently, have acted as a prohibition against their general use.

Under this supposition, the mention of cards in the *Trattato del Governo della Famiglia* of *Sandro di Pipozzo*,† written about 1299, and in

* Vide p. 65.

† Vide p. 67.

the Romance of *Renart le Contrefait*,* which was finished in 1341, and also their prohibition, in 1387, by John I. King of Castile,† may be fairly admitted as testimony of the practice of wood engraving at those respective periods, in Italy, France, and Spain. The smallness of the price paid for the three packs of cards gilt and coloured for King Charles VI. by *Jacquemin Gringonneur*,‡ about 1392, and recorded in a book of accounts of the court of France of the time, is sufficient evidence that they must have been first printed, and afterwards finished by hand.

But although from the paucity of express records of ancient wood engraving, we have had recourse to the early notices concerning the use of cards, still there appears sufficient reason to conclude, that long previous to the introduction of those articles of amusement, the art had been commonly applied, in different parts of Europe, to the purpose of administering to the superstition of the people, by the images of saints and other devout representations. Prints of this kind, impressed from blocks rudely engraved, and afterwards daubed over with a few gay colours, are expressly referred to in the Venetian decree above mentioned; and although such rude productions do not appear to have been preserved by the Italians, they are found in considerable numbers in the convents of Germany; seldom indeed accompanied with dates, but often bearing the marks of a great antiquity. The date 1384 on the wood-cut preserved at Lyons,‖ said to have been executed at Nuremberg, appears, I know not why, to have been suspected; that of 1423, on the St. Christopher, in the possession of Lord Spencer, and that of 1437, on the St. Sebastian, mentioned at p. 96, are, however, not subject to similar doubt. The St. Christopher, with its companion, the Annunciation, we have given our reasons for supposing was executed in Italy.§ The inscriptions on those two prints, and the prayer under the St. Sebas-

* Vide pp. 69. 70.
† Vide note, p. 77.
‡ Vide p. 69.
‖ Vide p. 88.
§ Vide p. 89, et seq.

tian, are sufficient to prove that the art of printing characters from engraved blocks of wood was neither the invention of Gutenberg, of Fust, or of Coster.*

Although the art of wood engraving does not appear to have been anciently practised in Italy with the same care and diligence as was bestowed upon it in Germany and the Low Countries, the Italians, nevertheless, upon the introduction of the newly invented art of typography among them, were not deficient in artists competent to the task of illustrating their first printed books with wood-cuts. The *Meditationes Reverendissimi patris Domini Johannis de Turrecremata,* printed at Rome in 1467, by *Ulric Han,* is accompanied by wood-cuts, which, although of excessive rudeness, are engraved, as Zani† assures us, by the hand of an Italian artist. The numerous cuts of figures and machinery that enrich the *Roberti Valturii opus de re Militari,* printed at Verona, by *Giovanni da Verona,* in 1472, are full of spirit, and are supposed to have been designed, and perhaps engraved, by Matteo Pasti, a Veronese artist of some note in those times, and the friend of Valturius.‡ The reader

* When I wrote the first chapter of this book, (vide p. 40) I was not aware of the memorandum in Rabbi Joseph's chronicle, in which mention is made of a block-book said to have been printed at Venice in 1428. If such a book ever existed, and the fact does not seem very improbable, it was, no doubt, a book of images, with inscriptions. Scriverius thinks it must have been the Biblia Pauperum, which the Rabbi chanced to see *at* Venice. Meerman gives no credit to the story, but inserts the passage, both in the original Hebrew and in a Latin translation, amongst his Documents. The Hebrew text is omitted in the following extract.

Documenta, Num. LXXX. R. Joseph Haccohen (qui etiam R. Joseph fil. Josuae appellatur) in Chronico quod Verba dierum inscribitur, atque Annales continet Regum Galliae et Domus Ottomannicae, edit. Venet. apud Cornelium Adelkind, a. 1554. ad a. 1428.

" Dicit Joseph Haccohen. Videtur jam his temporibus typographia inventa ; nam ipse ego vidi librum, typis excusum Venetiis, anno millesimo quadringentesimo vigesimo octavo."

† " Materiali," &c. p. 194, note 85. Further notice concerning this edition of Turrecremata has been before given at p. 29. A copy of one of the cuts is given in *De Murr*'s " Bibl. Noremb." vol. i. p. 260.

‡ *Maffei,* " Verona Illustrata," parte iii. col. 195, et seq. Matteo Pasti resided some time at Rimini, of which city was Valturius. Valturius speaks of Pasti, in one of his letters, as being eminently skilful in the arts of

will be enabled to form an idea of the style of these engravings from the fac-similes given of some of them in the fourth volume of Mr. Dibdin's *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*.

After the establishment of typography, the wood-engravers of Italy, and especially those of Venice, began to exert themselves with diligence; in order that their cuts, no longer exclusively destined to be distributed to the common people in commemoration of the miracles of their patron saints, might possess that beauty of execution necessary to render them truly ornamental to the printed volumes they were employed to illustrate or adorn: insomuch, that before the expiration of the fifteenth century, the art shewed itself with new charms in the chaste and delicate outlines of an unknown designer of those times, inserted in the first edition of the celebrated rhapsody of Polifilo.

But, as long before this, the more polished art of copper-plate engraving had been discovered, it is proper that we should no longer defer speaking of that invention, which will be the subject of our next Chapter.

Painting, Sculpture, and *Engraving*; and hence Maffei conjectures, with some appearance of probability, that the cuts in question were executed by his hand.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Invention of Chalcography.

Engraving on Metals with the Burin, practised by the Ancients. Works of Niello—*much practised in Italy during the Fifteenth Century. The Process, used in making such Works, described.* Maso Finiguerra *a Florentine Goldsmith, eminent in that way. His Practice of taking Impressions of his Engravings in Sulphur: also on damped Paper. The former Method considered. One of these Sulphurs described.* Vasari's *Account of* Finiguerra's *Practice of taking Impressions on Paper considered. His Discovery of that Method supposed to have taken place not later than* 1440. *The Researches of* Mariette *and* Gaburri, *in hopes to find Prints bearing his Name or Cypher. Impressions from Works of* Niello *of Anonymous Italian Goldsmiths discovered. An Impression, conjectured to be from one of* Finiguerra's *Engravings, described. The Conjecture confirmed by* Zani's *Discovery of an undoubted Impression from one of Finiguerra's Works of Niello, at Paris. Zani's Account of his Discovery. His Description of another Print at Paris, by the same Artist. The probability that Finiguerra lived to perfect, in some degree, his Invention; and that he engraved some Plates for the purpose of Publication. A third Engraving, supposed to be by Finiguerra, of which Zani met with two Impressions.*

IT has been observed, in a former Chapter,* that although the ancients were accustomed to use stamps of metal for the purpose of impressing wax, clay, and other substances capable of indentation, they appear to have been wholly unacquainted with the art of taking the impressions of those convex surfaces with ink, or with any

* Vide p. 57, et seq.

other tint on paper or parchment; and we have thence argued, that the transition from the one mode of impression to the other, however it may now appear to have been a very obvious one, was not so in reality.

Still greater obstacles opposed themselves to the invention of the art of taking impressions on paper from engraved plates of metal: for, as in these the strokes of the engraving are concave, and apparently out of the reach of pressure from any flat surface, like paper, they could never have been thought calculated for such a purpose until accident discovered that they were so. Notwithstanding, therefore, that the art of engraving figures and other objects with the *burin* upon plates of metal, as matters of taste and ornament, continued to be practised without interruption from the most remote periods of antiquity, until the time when it was discovered that such engravings were capable of being printed on paper; it is perhaps less a subject for our surprise that so many ages elapsed before that discovery was made, than of our gratulation that it took place at all.

That a species of engraving on metal every way fitted for impression, was used by the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Etruscans, and the Romans, is, indeed, a fact which the monuments of antiquity, preserved in our museums, place beyond all doubt. The engraved figures found upon so many of the ancient *paterus*, might be printed, were it not for the projecting border by which they are generally surrounded. Mr. Strutt, in his Dictionary of Engravers, has given the copy of an engraved plate of very remote antiquity, which is preserved in the British Museum, and is supposed, by him, to have been, originally, part of the sheath of a sword, or dagger. Five figures, perhaps intended to describe the rape of Helen, are represented upon it in outline. They are executed with the graver; and as the surface of the plate is flat, it might, as Mr. Strutt observes, even now be printed by the ordinary method used in taking the impressions of copper-plates, were not the metal apparently too fragile to endure the force of the press.

A *patera* of yellow metal, which was formerly in the Museum of the Cardinal Carpegna, and is represented in the plate beneath, is particularly interesting, although it is of less remote antiquity; as the effect of the engraved figures is enlivened in some places by parallel hatchings, similar to those used in copper-plate engraving in modern times. The learned Buonarroti, by whom it is described, observes " that it would be sufficient to occasion our astonishment " that the ancients did not discover the art of chalcography, were it " not known that discoveries of this sort generally occur accident- " ally to mechanics in the exercise of their calling."*

* " Osservazioni Istoriche sopra alcuni Medaglioni Antichi." *Proemio*, p. xvii. 4to Roma, 1698.

Vasari, who has been sometimes not improperly styled the Herodotus of modern art, informs us, that we are indebted, for the important invention of chalcography, to the good fortune and talents of MASO, or TOMMASO FINIGUERRA, an eminent Florentine goldsmith of the fifteenth century.

During that century a species of handicraft was much practised by the goldsmiths throughout Italy, but especially at Florence, termed, "working in *niello*." This mode of workmanship, which fell into neglect in the sixteenth century, was used in the decoration of plate destined for sacred purposes; as chalices, reliquaries, and *Paxes;* also on the hilts of swords, the handles of knives and forks, and on clasps and other female ornaments. It was likewise frequently adopted in small cabinets made of ebony, which, here and there, were ornamented with little statues of silver, and plates of the same metal "worked in *niello*," with figures, with historical representations, or with arabesques.*

The process employed in this kind of work is described by Vasari in one of the preliminary chapters to his "Lives of the Painters," where, at the same time, he first introduces us to Finiguerra; and I am the more induced to give the passage, as well as whatever else is to be collected from Vasari relative to the origin of Chalcography, in a careful translation of his own words, as he is the only author who wrote on the subject at a time when oral testimony, at least, to the facts he relates, might still have existed, and, consequently, the only historian of any real authority; and as subsequent writers have quoted him, for the most part, very incorrectly.†

"The method," says he, "of producing works of *niello*, which "are no other than designs hatched or painted upon silver, as we "paint or hatch delicately with a pen, was discovered by the

* *Lanzi*, "Storia Pittorica," tom. i. p. 77, Edizione di Bassano.

† A catalogue of those who have mistated the account of Vasari would, indeed, contain the names of almost every author on the subject of engraving, except those who, writing in Italian, were enabled to use Vasari's own words.

" goldsmiths even in the time of the ancients; for there are to be " seen hollows cut with instruments of iron, and filled up with some " kind of composition, in their works of gold and silver.

" The way of making works of this kind is, first to design the " intended subject with a point of steel upon the silver, which must " be of an even and smooth surface, and then to engrave it with the " *burin*—an instrument which is made of a square rod of iron, cut " at the end, from one angle to the angle opposite, obliquely; so " that being very sharp and cutting, as it were, on both sides, its " point runs along with great ease, and the artist is enabled to " engrave with it most delicately. With this instrument all things " are done which are engraved upon plates of metal; whether with " the intention of filling the work afterwards with *niello*, or of " leaving it empty; according to the will of the artist.

" When, therefore, he has engraved and finished his work with " the burin, he takes silver and lead, and, mixing them together " on the fire, makes of them a composition which is of a black " colour, very brittle, and, when melted, of a nature to run with " great nicety into the work.* This composition is then bruised " very fine, and laid upon the engraved plate of silver, which it is " necessary should be quite clean; the plate is then placed near a " fire of green wood; when, by means of a pair of bellows, the " flame is blown upon the *niello*, which, being dissolved by the " heat, runs about till it has filled all the engraved work made " by the burin. Afterwards, when the silver is cold, the super- " fluous part of the composition is scraped off, or worn away by " degrees with a pumice-stone; and lastly, the work is rubbed " with the hand, or with a piece of leather, until the true surface " appears, and every thing is polished.

" In this mode of workmanship, Maso Finiguerra, of Florence, " was a most admirable artist, as may be seen in certain *Paxes* by

* Vasari appears in this passage to have omitted some of the ingredients of which the *niello* was composed. The defect will be found supplied in a subsequent page.

" his hand, worked in *niello,* in the church of St. Giovanni, at " Florence, which are justly deemed astonishing productions.

" From this kind of Engraving was derived the art of Chalco- " graphy, by means of which we now see so many prints, by Ita- " lian and German artists throughout Italy; for as those who " worked in silver, before they filled their engravings with *niello,* " took impressions of them with earth, over which they poured " liquid sulphur, so the printers discovered the way of taking off " impressions from copper-plates with a press, as we see them do " in these days."*

The above is all the information that we find relative to the origin of Engraving, in the first edition of Vasari, printed in 1550; for although Finiguerra is mentioned by him a second time in that edition, in the life of Pollajuolo, nothing is said of his practice of taking impressions from his engravings on paper; so that but for his augmented work, published in 1568, we might still be in ignorance of Maso's pretensions as the inventor of chalcography.† Whether the Aretine biographer intended that his readers should infer, from the latter part of this passage, that Maso was the inventor, or whether he himself was uninformed of the fact until after the publication of the first edition of his book, may appear to be a question not very easy to determine; though, for reasons, which will hereafter appear, I am inclined to the former opinion.

* *Vasari,* tom. i. p. 61, Edizione di Bologna. This passage is the same in all the editions.

† There is indeed a passage in the Life of Andrea Mantegna, in the first edition of Vasari, which might lead any person, unacquainted with that writer's careless mode of expression, to suppose that he meant to give Mantegna the credit of the invention of chalcography. " Lasciò costui " alla pittura," says Vasari, " la difficultà " degli scorti delle figure al di sotto in sù; " invenzione difficile et capricciosa; *Et il* " *modo dello intagliare in rame le Stampe* " *della figure,*" &c. " He left to painting " the difficult art of foreshortening figures, " *di sotto in sù,*" &c.—" *and the method of* " *engraving figures upon copper-plates,*" &c. I am of opinion, however, that Vasari meant no more than that Mantegna was the first who published large engravings worthy of notice, in any number.

Vasari's next mention of Finiguerra, is in his lives of Antonio and Pietro del Pollajuolo. "There was," says he, "in Florence, "at the same time," viz. about 1450, "another goldsmith, called "Maso Finiguerra, who was deservedly of extraordinary repute, "especially for his management of the burin, and his works of "*niello*; for there never had been known any artist who, in small "or in greater spaces, could execute such a prodigious number of "figures as he did; as may still be seen in certain *Paxes* which he "made for the church of S. Giovanni, at Florence, with most "minute stories of the Passion of Christ. He designed a vast "deal and extremely well, of which are many proofs in my Book "of Drawings, representing as well naked and draped figures as "historical subjects, done by him in Acquarella."*

It has been objected to the correctness of Vasari, in the above passage, that only one *Pax* by Finiguerra is to be found at S. Giovanni, and that representing, not stories of the Passion of Christ, but "the Assumption of the Madonna." This objection is not conclusive; for, in another part of the life of Antonio Pollajuolo, after describing various works in silver executed by that artist's scholars, he adds: "but many of these, as well as of the works of "Pollajuolo, have been melted down and destroyed, in conse-"quence of the necessities of the city in time of war;" a fate which may also have befallen some of these works of Finiguerra in later times.

The learned Gori, however, gives us a piece of intelligence, which makes it more than probable that Vasari was, upon this occasion, misinformed. After dwelling with rapture upon the *Pax* of "the Assumption of the Madonna," by Maso, a work of which we shall hereafter have occasion to speak more particularly, he informs us that another *Pax* of the same kind, is also preserved among the treasures of the church of S. Giovanni, representing, in a composition of minute figures, "the Crucifixion of our Saviour;" a work

* Vasari, Ediz. di Bologna, tom. i. p. 371. This passage, like the last, is the same in the first edition and in all the subsequent ones.

of great beauty, which Matteo, the son of Giovanni Dei, an excellent goldsmith, and a citizen of Florence, delivered finished in the year 1455; receiving, in payment for his labour and the materials, sixty-eight florins of gold.* We may, therefore, conclude that Vasari, desiring to view the works of Finiguerra, of which he had heard such high commendations, was shewn, by the person who had them in custody, both these *Paxes* as the productions of the same artist.

We now come to the third and last passage in which Vasari speaks of Finiguerra: it is found in the beginning of a chapter, added to the second edition of his work, wherein he has given an account of Marc Antonio and other engravers, and is by far the most important to the present inquiry, as it is there only we are expressly told that he first practised the mode of taking impressions from engraved plates on paper. The original, however, of this passage, especially in that part of it which relates to the other impressions or casts produced by means of earth, sulphur, and smoke, is extremely obscure; insomuch, that most of the Italian writers who have treated on the subject since Vasari, have been satisfied to transcribe his words, as if fearful to attempt their explanation. The process used in making these sulphurs was, no doubt, still of general notoriety amongst artists when Vasari wrote; and hence, eager to proceed, he indulged in a conciseness of expression which, it never occurred to him, was, in itself, wholly inadequate to explain so complicated an operation to those who should live near three centuries after its disuse.

" The art of copper-plate engraving," says Vasari, " derived its " origin from Maso Finiguerra, a Florentine goldsmith, about the " year of our Lord, 1460. For it was the custom of that artist, " whenever he had engraved any work in silver which was to be " filled with *niello*, to take an impression or mould of it, pre- " viously, with very fine earth: over this mould he poured melted

* *Ant. Francisci Gori*—" Thesaurus Veterum Diptychorum," tom. iii. pp. 315-16-17.

" sulphur, from which, when cold, the earth was removed: the " sulphur cast, then exhibiting an impression corresponding with " the engraved plate, was, lastly, rubbed with soot moistened with " oil, until all its cavities were filled with black; when the whole " produced an effect similar to that which the *niello* afterwards " gave to the engraving on the silver. He also took impressions " upon damped paper, with the same dark tint, pressing a round " roller, smooth in every part, over the paper; by which means " his works became printed; the impressions so taken assuming " the appearance of drawings done with a pen."* Vasari then proceeds to relate that Finiguerra was followed, in the practice of taking impressions from his engravings, by Baccio Baldini, and so forth.

Such, I am convinced, is Vasari's true meaning. It is to be observed, that the word *argento,* in the Italian, is followed by a semicolon; and that, again, by a capital E, as at the beginning of a sentence. This mode was often used by Vasari and other old Italian writers: the semicolon, with the capital letter following it,

* Lest I should be accused of having taken unwarrantable liberties in the translation in the text, I here insert Vasari's own words, accompanied by as literal a translation of them as I am able.

" Il principio dunque dell' intagliare le " stampe venne da *Maso Finiguerra* Fio- " rentino, circa gli anni di nostra salute 1460. " perche costui tutte le cose, che intagliò in " argento per empirle di *niello,* le improntò " con terra, e gittatovi sopra solfo liquefatto, " vennero improntate, e ripiene di fumo; onde " a olio mostravano il medesimo, che l'argento; " E ciò fece ancora con carta humida, e con " la medesima tinta agravandovi sopra con un " rullo tondo, ma piano per tutto, il che non " solo le faceva apparire stampate, ma veni- " vano come disegnate di penna."

" The origin, therefore, of copper-plate " engraving was derived from *Maso Fini-* " *guerra,* a Florentine, about the year of our " Lord 1460: for that artist impressed with " earth all the things which he engraved in " silver, for the purpose of filling them with " *niello,* and having poured over them" (the earthen impressions) " liquid sulphur, they " became printed and filled with smoke; " whence, being rubbed with oil," (literally, " whence in oil,") " they shewed the same " as the silver; and this he also did with " damped paper, and with the same tint " pressing over it with a round roller, smooth " in every part, which not only made them " appear printed, but they came as if drawn " with a pen."

were, together, at least equivalent to the colon. The learned Lanzi,* indeed, when citing this passage, changed the semicolon after the word *argento* into a full stop; thereby rendering the sense of the author more clear—a liberty in which I have followed him in the above translation. On the other hand, some of the modern editors of Vasari, have incautiously discarded the capital E as a barbarism; leaving the semicolon, insufficient of itself for the proper division of the sentence, as it was: not reflecting that the sense of a passage, at best not very easy to understand, might thereby be rendered more obscure.

The first author, however, who perverted the meaning of Vasari's words in this place, though no doubt with the intention of making them intelligible, was Baldinucci, who, of the two processes above described, most unaccountably makes one. "Finiguerra," says Baldinucci, "whenever he had engraved any thing in silver, for "the purpose of filling it with *niello*, was accustomed to impress it "with earth; and then, having poured over it melted sulphur, his "work became in such a manner printed in that sulphur, that "having afterwards filled its impressed cavities with a certain tint "mixed with oil, and pressed damp paper over it, by means of "a wooden roller, his engraving became expressed upon the paper, "in the same manner as it was in the silver: and these printed "papers had the appearance of pen-drawings."†

The words of Vasari cannot admit of this construction. Whatever obscurities there may be in his mode of expression, it is most clear that he intended to describe, not one uninterrupted series of varied operations, all for the single purpose of taking an impression of his work on paper; but two distinct processes: the one beginning with the impressed earth, and ending with the completion of the sulphur; when, its cavities being filled with black, it looked as the silver plate would do after it received the *niello*: the other, the

* *Storia Pittorica*, tom. i. p. 78.

† *Baldinucci*, "Notizie de' Professori del Disegno," &c. tom. iv. pp. 3. 4. Ediz. del Manni.

more simple operation of taking an impression from the plate itself on paper, by first filling the engraved work with soot mixed with oil, then laying damped paper upon the plate, and lastly, pressing over it with a roller. It is surprising that Baldinucci should not have seen this, and that the manifest unfitness of a substance so brittle as sulphur, for the purposes of impression, should not have occurred to him. Still more surprising it is that he should have been followed, as we shall find to have been the case, in so ill-founded an interpretation of Vasari's words, by others, to whom the insufficiency of the sulphur to resist the necessary pressure of the roller, did appear most obvious.

The impressions, therefore, which Finiguerra was accustomed to take from his engravings on silver, were of two kinds. The first, cast out of earthen moulds, in sulphur : the second, printed on paper from the plate itself, by means of a roller.

Of the former kind—the sulphur—two specimens still exist, of the authenticity of which there can be no doubt; since they are, both of them, the impressions of the *Pax* of "the Assumption" before mentioned, and must have been taken by Maso himself, before he completed that celebrated work with the *niello*. One of these sulphurs formerly belonged to the learned Gori, who mentions it in his writings,* and is now in the magnificent cabinet of the Durazzo family at Genoa, accompanied, as Lanzi informs us,† by a paper in Gori's hand writing, in which he attests the having confronted it with the silver *Pax*. A short dissertation upon the other sulphur, written by its proprietor, the Count Seratti, has been published by Zani; and as, from its presenting a detailed account of what may be justly termed one of the most interesting monuments of the arts of the fifteenth century, it cannot but be acceptable to the reader, it is here inserted. It is necessary however to premise, by way of caution, that Seratti was one of those who unfortunately adopted Baldinucci's

* Thesaurus Veterum Diptychorum, tom. iii. p. 315.

† *Storia Pittorica*, tom. i. p. 79.

erroneous interpretation of the passage in Vasari last mentioned; and that, consequently, the justness of his argument cannot be so well depended upon, as the accuracy of his description. Upon some of the writer's opinions, indeed, it will be necessary that we should animadvert, lest other persons, after the example of a recent German writer* upon the same subject, should admit them into their creed, to the great discredit of Finiguerra's pretensions.

" *A short Dissertation upon the Sulphur by Maso Finiguerra, in the* " *possession of the Count Seratti.*

" Maso Finiguerra lived from 1400 to 1460. He was the disciple " of Masaccio.† He applied himself to the study of the goldsmith's " art, designed in chiaro-scuro, modelled in basso-relievo, and " excelled in works of *niello.* In executing works of this kind, " the intended subject was engraved with the burin upon a plate of " silver; this was afterwards covered over with *niello,* which was a " metallic substance, reduced to powder, composed of silver, copper, " lead, sulphur, and borax;‡ so that it was more easily fusible than " silver, and of a black colour: the necessary degree of heat was " then applied, which, melting this metallic compound, without " affecting the silver plate, occasioned it to run about until it had " filled all the strokes of the engraving. Lastly, the superfluous " part of the *niello* which rose above the surface of the silver plate, " was consumed by scrapers, files, and pumice stone, until the

* *Mr. Bartsch,* of whose opinions more hereafter.

† *Seratti* does not appear to have had any authority for placing the birth of Finiguerra in the year 1400 or his death in 1460. His assertion that he was a scholar of Masaccio, seems to have no other foundation than the opinion of *Baldinucci.*

‡ *Seratti* has here supplied a defect of Vasari, who, in speaking of the ingredients of which the *niello* was composed, carelessly omitted to mention the copper, the sulphur, and the borax. It is evident that silver and lead alone, could never have made a black and brittle substance capable of pulverization, such as he describes the *niello* to have been.

" even surface of the plate appeared in every part; so that the " *niello* only remained in the strokes made by the burin, thus giving " to the engraved design its true effect.

" There have been celebrated, as the principal works of Maso, " two *Paxes*, which are preserved among the treasures of the " church of S. Giovanni, at Florence. The one, representing 'the " Assumption,' is certainly by him. It was executed in 1452; and cost " upwards of sixty-six florins of gold—a large sum in those times— " as appears in the ledger for that year, marked AA. preserved in " the archives of the church. The other *Pax* was made by Matteo, " the son of Giovanni Dei, in 1455, and represents the cruci- " fixion: it is very inferior to that of Maso, both in composition " and design."*

" The *Pax* representing 'the Assumption,' is well known as " being the most certain and best authenticated work by Finiguerra " of that kind, and, perhaps, indeed the only one now existing; " it is also celebrated for the delicacy and intelligence with which it " is engraved, and the beauty of its design."

" The figures in this composition are about forty in number; all of " them so eminent for beauty and expression, that the whole might " rank with the finest productions of the best æra of painting, were " it not for a little too much regularity in the distribution of the " figures, and some degree of hardness in the outlines of the folds

* *Gori*, (" Thesaurus Veterum Diptychorum,") tom. iii. p. 315, et seq. after having spoken of other magnificent works of art in the treasury of the Church of S. Giovanni, thus commences his description of these two *Paxes*. " Juxta haec pretiosa monumenta duae tabulae argenteae *ad pacis osculum dandum suscipiendumque*, ponderis librarum fere viginti, signis argenteis inauratis circumornatae, cum manubris argenteis in postica parte, exponuntur, quae immenso opere elaboratae sunt," &c. &c. There can be little doubt that the engraved pictures which occupy the centre of these magnificent pieces of plate, were executed separately from the massy frames that surround them, and that they were fixed into them by soldering, after they were completely finished. Otherwise, indeed, it would have been difficult to take the impressions of the plates in earth and sulphur, and impossible to have done so on the damp paper with a roller.

" of the draperies. Mariette desired a copy of it, which was sent " to him, together with some memoranda respecting it, by the " Cav. Gaburri."*

" Upon this undoubted production of Maso, the Italians rest " their pretensions, in opposition to the Germans, of having " been the first to invent that sort of engraving in metal, which " was afterwards found adapted to impress designs upon paper."†

" Vasari and Baldinucci relate, that when Finiguerra had en- " graved any work, he printed it, before he introduced the *niello*, " with very fine earth; that upon this earth he poured melted sul- " phur; and that then, having filled the cavities in the sulphur" (corresponding to the engraving in the silver plate) " with soot, " mixed with oil, he printed his designs on paper with a wooden " roller.‡

" It is possible that upon some occasions he may have attempted " this process: but his chief object in casting the sulphur must " have been to assure himself of the perfection of his work, previous " to introducing the *niello*. Sulphur is of too brittle a nature to " resist the force that would be required to take an impression from " it: moreover, the colour which is found in the sulphur which " I possess of the *Pax* of the Assumption, is pure lamp-black, or " soot diluted in water, without any oil,§ and, consequently, inca-

* The inquiries of *Mariette*, with *Gaburri*'s answer to them, will be found in a subsequent page.

† We have judged that it would be most satisfactory to the reader, that we should give Seratti's short dissertation, with all its errors, entire. It has already been shewn that engravings on metal, every way calculated for impression, had been executed more than two thousand years before the mode of taking impressions from them on paper was discovered; and it is hardly necessary to repeat, that it is the latter invention only which the Italians, upon the authority of Vasari, ascribe to Finiguerra.

‡ We shall notice the erroneous opinions and unfounded assertions of Seratti, in this and some of the following paragraphs of his dissertation, in a subsequent page.

§ This piece of information, founded, perhaps, upon a chemical analysis of the black colour introduced in Maso's sulphur, seems somewhat at variance with Vasari's words, " onde a olio," &c. (vide p. 267) nor can I undertake to reconcile the apparent contradiction, any further than by the supposition

" pable of giving an impression upon paper. Besides, had he been " desirous of taking impressions upon paper, he could have done it " more effectually from the engraved plate itself; and thus have " spared himself the pains required in taking the earthen impres- " sion and, afterwards, the sulphur cast. It is, indeed, said that the " Count Durazzo possesses some fragment on paper, printed by " Maso in this manner.

" It is not improbable, considering the estimation in which the " works of Finiguerra were held, from the very first, that Baldini, " or Botticelli, or other artists, contemporary with, or little poste- " rior to him, might make copies of some of them for the purpose " of printing ; after accident had discovered to *them* that engraved " plates of silver or copper could be applied to such a use. Hence " may have arisen the opinion, that Baldini and Botticelli engraved " under the direction and from the designs of Finiguerra :* the more " so as, upon a comparison of the *Pax* of the Assumption, the un- " doubted work of Maso, with the prints of Baldini and Botticelli, " we discover the same difference as between an original by a great " master, and the imitations of inferior artizans and copyists.

" The ingenious operation of casting the sulphur, and filling the " engraved cavities transferred to it, with soot, was, no doubt, " undertaken by Finiguerra, that he might discover whether his " work was perfect, if it was in harmony, if any thing was wanting " in the design, if any corrections were required ; for after the " introduction of the *niello,* nothing could be amended. All these " things it was impossible for him to ascertain from the silver plate, " with the strokes of the burin empty ; where the design itself could

that the small portion of oil, which had been rubbed over the sulphur, might, in the course of three hundred and fifty years, have so far evaporated, as to render its detection a matter of no small difficulty. I can speak from experience, that many of the impressions of early engravings, even some of those of Marc Antonio, will not bear the application of moderately heated water, without losing a considerable proportion of the black tint with which they are printed; and yet there can be little doubt that that tint was originally mixed with oil.

* I know not where Seratti met with this opinion.

" be but faintly seen, and the general effect and harmony of the " work not at all. Nor could he introduce any extraneous matter " into the engraved cavities, as that would have prevented the " *niello* afterwards from adhering properly to the silver.

" It was therefore necessary for him, in the first place, to take " an impression from his plate with some very fine kind of earth; " not that this simple process could, alone, answer his purpose; " for as such an impression, besides being in a direction opposite " to the engraved plate, would display all the strokes of the " engraving convexly, the work upon it would have been incapable " of receiving an even tint by any means he could employ. By " impressing, first the earth upon the plate, and then pouring the " sulphur upon the earth, the sulphur came the same way as the " plate, with the work concave; so that soot or lamp-black was " easily introduced into it; when the whole acquired the same " effect as it was intended the *niello* should afterwards give to the " silver.

" The Count Seratti possesses the sulphur taken by Finiguerra " from his *Pax* of ' the Assumption,' which might, perhaps, more " properly be termed the ' Coronation of the Virgin.' This sul- " phur was originally fixed in a wooden frame of considerable " dimensions, ornamented with columns and cornices of carved " work, gilt. From so rich a decoration, some idea may be formed " of the estimation in which it was held at that early period. The " ornament, having suffered from the injuries of time, has been, " since, carefully cut away; leaving the sulphur, in the form of " a small picture, with that part of the wood only in which it was " first inserted. The sulphur, which had sustained injury by small " pieces having been chipped off in some places near the centre, has " been restored by the professor Luigi Levrier.

" In supplying the parts wanting, which were but very small, it " was judged necessary to avoid the use of sulphur, lest the heat " requisite in the application of it might affect the adjacent parts of " the work: wax would not answer, because it is liable to change

" colour; nor *scagliola*, because it shrinks in drying. The pro-
" fessor therefore used a fine kind of plaister, tempered with oil;
" and upon this copied the parts deficient, stroke for stroke, with
" the point of a small pencil and oil colour, from the original silver
" still preserved in the church of S. Giovanni. The parts restored
" are to be discovered by viewing the sulphur in an oblique direc-
" tion, the lines in those places being even with the surface of the
" sulphur, but in the remainder, concave.

" The sulphur has been compared with the silver *pax*, and scru-
" pulously confronted with it, line for line, in every part: upon
" this occasion no variation whatever was discovered between the
" one and the other; whence we may infer that Finiguerra, upon
" taking this impression, found that his work required neither
" addition nor amendment. This exact comparison proves its
" originality. That it should be copied is absolutely impossible; and,
" after the *niello* was introduced, an impression could no longer
" be taken: the sulphur was, therefore, beyond all doubt, made
" by the hand of Finiguerra himself. In some respects, this sulphur
" has a value beyond that of the silver *pax*, from which it was
" taken; the latter, from its great age, having acquired a dark
" *patina*, and being worn in some places; so that the work appears
" very faint, and is difficult to be distinguished; whereas the former
" is well preserved, and of a most brilliant and striking effect.

" This sulphur is semicircular at top, and measures, from the
" summit of the arch to the bottom, four inches and ten twelfths.
" Its breadth, is three inches and three twelfths. In the midst, a
" little towards the upper part of the composition, Jesus Christ is
" seen placing a crown on the head of the Virgin: both these
" figures are seated under a kind of tabernacle. In the place of
" pilasters to support the tabernacle are two angels standing, with
" vases containing roses; and, a little below, are four other angels,
" two on each side, also standing, with lilies in their hands. Above,
" on either side, stand three angels, blowing trumpets; and within
" the circular boundary of the picture, over the tabernacle, are four

" other angels, in the air, holding a scroll, on which is written, " ASSVMPTA. EST. MARIA. IN. CELVM. GAVDET. EXER- " CITVS. ANGELORVM.

" In the foreground of the composition, the objects nearest the " eye are two saints on their knees (S. Augustine and S. Ambrose). " The former holds a crozier, and is dressed in his sacerdotal cope, " on the collar of which are these letters, AGOSTI: the latter has " a book* in his hand, and on the collar of his dress, similar to the " other, is written ANBRVS. A little behind these, on the one " side, are five female saints; two of whom, S. Catharine and " S. Agnes, are distinguished, the former, by her wheel, the latter, " by a lamb. On the other side are five male saints: among " these S. John the Baptist is designated by his under-garment of " camel's hair, and the cross in his hand. Behind these figures, on " the one side, are three other female saints; one of them, S. Mary " Magdalen, with the vase of ointment; and, on the other, three " more saints of the opposite sex. Behind these, again, are three " other female, and three male saints; the females being, all of " them, on the left hand of the composition, the males on the " right; using the terms left and right, to denote those parts of " the picture which are opposite to the left or right hand of the " spectator, as they are used in describing prints.

" I have," adds Seratti, " made many experiments, with the " assistance of proper persons, in the hopes that old works of *niello* " might be rendered capable of being printed. I imagined, that " in order to extract the niello from the engraved plate, it would " be expedient to make use of solvents which would act upon the " lead, the borax, and the sulphur, without affecting the copper or " the silver; for had any solvent, used for the purpose, the power " of acting even upon the copper, it could not be applied with

* That which *Seratti* took for a book is, probably, nothing more than part of the further hand of the Saint, which, in Zani's copy, appears joined to the other, as if in the act of prayer.

" safety; since, as there is no silver without some alloy of copper, " the plate itself would be corroded in the operation, and rendered " unfit for printing.

" I conceived that the small particles of copper and silver, used " in composing the *niello*, finding themselves insulated and sepa- " rated by the solution of the lead, the borax, and the sulphur, " with which they had been bound together, would have come " away of themselves; leaving the engraved cavities, made by the " burin in the plate, entirely empty. In works of *niello* coarsely " engraved, and especially in letters of not too small a size, this " was the case; and such engraved plates, which had, at first, been " filled with niello, were rendered capable of furnishing impres- " sions. But with those of minute and delicate workmanship I " could never succeed. Some solution of the niello was, indeed, " effected; but, I suppose, the small component particles of silver " and copper remained so tightly fixed in the fine strokes made " by the burin, that it was impossible for them to disengage them- " selves. The impressions which we have of works of niello, must " have been taken, either from those niellos which were executed " in the time of Baldini and Botticelli, when the art had been " discovered of taking impressions from engraved plates, on paper, " previous to introducing the niello; or from such plates as had " not been finished, and in which the melted niello had conse- " quently never been introduced."

" The print of the conversion of S. Paul, is from a plate which " was intended to be worked in *niello*, by an artist of the name of " Dati:* the plate was discovered in its present unfinished state, " and, in consequence, it has been capable of furnishing impres-

* The Count Seratti was some time governor of Leghorn. It was there that Finiguerra's sulphur was shewn to Zani, to whom, upon his departure, the Count presented the dissertation which he had written. The above concluding paragraph probably relates to a print in the Count's collection, concerning which some conversation had taken place during Zani's stay at Leghorn; and of which, it is to be regretted, Zani himself makes no further mention in his notes.

" sions. This work is now preserved in the Gallery at Flo-
" rence."

Seratti begins the above dissertation by boldly affirming, that Finiguerra lived from 1400 to 1460, and that he was the scholar of Masaccio; relying upon Baldinucci alone, for Vasari does not give us such information. He soon afterwards gives Baldinucci's erroneous account of Maso's discovery, stating, very improperly, that Vasari and Baldinucci have so written; for, as has been already shewn, Vasari gives no such relation. He next proceeds to observe that these sulphurs, from their brittle nature, are ill fitted for the purpose of throwing off impressions; and, lastly, in consequence, (proud and jealous of his sulphur cast, which, with the exception of the silver *pax*, he, perhaps, was gratified by considering as the only specimen still existing of Maso's extraordinary talents) he concludes that the story of his taking impressions from his engravings on paper, is altogether unfounded. For although he admits that he might have taken such impressions from the plate itself, adding, that it is said the Count Durazzo possesses some fragment of that kind, still, in what immediately follows, he evidently means it to be inferred that he did not. He observes that, considering the great estimation in which Finiguerra's *niellos* were held from the first, it is not improbable that Baldini or Botticelli, after accident had discovered to them that engraved plates could be printed, might copy some of them, (i. e. Finiguerra's works) for the purpose of printing. He ends by telling us that the impressions which we have from works of *niello*, must have been taken from plates engraved in the time of Baldini and Botticelli, or from such other engravings as by accident had remained unfinished, and consequently not filled with the niello. Thus would this writer deprive Maso of the honor due to him as the inventor of copper-plate printing, to transfer it to Baldini or Botticelli: not reflecting that, when he denied the authority of Vasari, he denied the only authority upon which Italy rests its claims to the invention in question.

It would be labour in vain to attempt any further elucidation of

the process used by Finiguerra in making his casts of sulphur. It was indeed most ingenious; and to any one who considers the exquisite delicacy of the engraved work which, first printed with earth, was afterwards to be transferred to the sulphur cast, with every minute stroke of the burin—strokes finer than the finest hair —perfect and entire, would appear altogether incredible, did not the existence of the monuments themselves constrain the belief.

As to the purpose for which these sulphurs were made, Vasari is silent. Lanzi* and Seratti have supposed them to have been the means used by Finiguerra to ascertain the effect of his work before he introduced the *niello;* the latter of those writers adding, that he could not introduce into the cavities of his engraving any extraneous matter, because it would have prevented the *niello,* afterwards, from adhering properly to the silver. Both of these opinions seem destitute of any solid foundation. To the first it may be objected, that the sulphur of Seratti has been found exactly similar to the silver *Pax* in its finished state, which makes greatly against such an opinion; and what, it may be asked, in reply to the second, was the earth, pressed into the cavities of the engraving, preparatory to the sulphur, but extraneous matter? Seratti, however, no doubt, meant glutinous or oleous matter.

Upon these points, Bartsch is very satisfactory. "It is clear," says that writer,† "that every thing advanced by Lanzi and Zani, as "to the necessity and the intention of these sulphurs, is but simple "conjecture. . . . . Our experience fully convinces us that Maso, "when he wanted to see the effect of his work, had no occasion to "resort to any other expedient than the one employed in our days "by every engraver of copper-plates; that of filling the strokes of "his engraving with some kind of black. It is true that this "method is not always sufficient for the engraver whose plate is "destined to throw off impressions upon white paper; because the

* "Storia Pittorica," tom. i. p. 78. et seq.

† "Le Peintre Graveur," tom. xiii. p. 14. et seq.

" strokes of the burin, when viewed upon the copper, have always " an effect more or less calculated to deceive; appearing generally " more soft and beautiful than they shew when printed upon the " white paper; where the smallest faults, the most trifling irregula- " rities in the thickness or depth of the strokes, immediately strike " the eye. This ordeal, this rigid examination, was not necessary " to the worker in *niello:* his work was finished and perfect; when " looked at and examined, upon the plate itself, it appeared so; " and, consequently, he had no need to assure himself of it by " a proof printed upon paper, or any other material whatsoever.

" With regard to the remark of Zani," (Bartsch should have said Seratti) " that Maso could not introduce black, or any other extra- " neous matter, into the strokes of his engraving, as it would pre- " vent the *niello* from adhering properly to the silver, I have only " to say that it is wholly unfounded. It is, in fact, absolutely " impossible for any artist to prevent dirt and grease from getting " into his work during the long process of engraving a plate. This " dirt or grease being incompatible with the *niello,* was, therefore, " to be removed before the *niello* was introduced: for this purpose " of cleansing their plates, the workers in *niello* used a particular " process. Thus we read in Cellini:* ' As the beauty of a work " of *niello* consists in its appearing united, and free from little holes " or bubbles, it is necessary that the plate should be well boiled in " clean water mixed with oak ashes, which operation is termed, " amongst our goldsmiths, *la cenerata.* After, therefore,' continues " Cellini, ' your plate has been boiled in these ashes for a quarter " of an hour, it should be put into a bason filled with the purest " water, when the engraving should be well rubbed with a small " brush made of bristles, till the strokes are thoroughly cleansed " from every impurity.' "

These sulphur casts, therefore, were not necessary to enable Maso to judge of the effect of his engravings in the various stages

* " Trattato del Oreficeria," cap. ii. p. 24.

of their advancement; besides the labour required in casting them opposes such an idea. They were not used for the purpose of throwing off impressions on paper; nor were they fitted for such a purpose. The most natural conclusion appears to be, that they were made by Maso with great care, as interesting memorials of works which he was soon to deliver into the hands of his employers: they might serve as objects of study and example to his scholars, and were, perhaps, occasionally given to friends. That they were held in very high estimation is sufficiently evident from the ponderous magnificence lavished, by their first possessors, upon the Frames, or Tabernacles, in which they were enshrined.

Upon a careful comparison of the three passages which have been given from Vasari, with each other, according to the usual mode of examining evidence, we shall find in them every mark of candid and fair testimony. They are found at very distant parts of that writer's voluminous work, and were doubtless written at distant periods. Each of them contains some particular in which the others are defective; each, at the same time, is, upon the whole, corroborative of the rest. There is no contradiction among them—no want of consistency,

In the first passage (Chap. xxxiii. of the preliminary observations on painting) Vasari instructs us in the mode in which works of *niello* were executed: he informs us that it appears from existing monuments of gold and silver, that the ancients practised a kind of workmanship not very dissimilar: that Maso Finiguerra was an admirable artist in that way; as is seen in his *Paxes* at S. Giovanni: and, lastly, that from this kind of workmanship was derived the art of engraving and printing copper-plates: "for that, as it was cus-
" tomary with those who worked in silver, to take the impressions
" of their engravings, before they filled them with the *niello*, by
" means of earth, over which they poured liquefied sulphur; so the
" printers found out the method of taking off impressions from cop-
" per-plates with a press, as is now used."

It has already been observed that, although this passage may appear to afford but equivocal evidence of Maso's individual pretensions, if taken singly, there is, nevertheless, reason to believe that Vasari could not have been ignorant of them when he wrote it, and, consequently, that he must have intended it as a brief record of that artist's claims to the invention in question.

Vasari, who was born in the year 1512, expressly tells us, in that part of his life where he mentions the occasion of his undertaking his great work of the lives of the painters, sculptors, and architects, (about 1544,) that he had been accustomed from his boyhood to make written memoranda of whatever he was able to collect relative to the old artists; "every information concerning "whom," says he, "I held most dear." In various parts of his book he informs us that, besides the *viva voce*, or written information of his friends, he was assisted by the writings of Lorenzo Ghiberti, Domenico Ghirlandaio, and other old artists; and at the end of his Life of Ghiberti, he records his intimacy, when a youth of fifteen, with Vittorio Ghiberti, the descendant of Lorenzo; from whom, in the year 1528, he tells us he procured some original drawings of Lorenzo, and of Bartoluccio, another artist of the same family, with other designs by Giotto.

At this time Vasari intended being a goldsmith, and was studying that art under one Manno, of whom he speaks in terms of affectionate regard. The art of working in *niello* had not yet fallen entirely into disuse; nor is it improbable that the practice of taking the impressions of works of that kind in sulphur, still continued, and was practised by Manno himself. It cannot be doubted that Vasari was accustomed to meet, at the house of his master, with the principal artists of the same profession; some of whom must have been acquainted with those who had been the contemporaries of Finiguerra himself, and perhaps the witnesses of his invention: and, as we learn from Cellini,* that in the time of his youth (an. 1515) the

* *Benvenuto Cellini*, "Trattato del Oreficeria," ediz. 1569, p. 11.

old goldsmiths of Florence were never ceasing in their praise of Finiguerra's works of *niello,* we may fairly conclude that the mention of his name would occur, not unfrequently, among those of the profession a dozen years afterwards; and that the opening of a portfolio of prints would occasionally give rise to a repetition of the often told, and then well attested, story of his discovery of chalcography. It is therefore very improbable that Vasari was uninformed of Maso's claims to that invention, until after the publication of the first edition of his work; and there appears, moreover, good reason to believe that he received the account, which he has given us, from persons of undoubted authority.

Vasari, it may be observed, speaks of the custom of taking sulphurs of such works in silver as were intended to be filled with *niello,* as commonly practised among the goldsmiths. It is to be regretted that he did not, at the same time, afford us some information as to the period when works of *niello* were first introduced in Florence.

The first mention of them, that I have been able to find in the body of his work, is at the end of the Life of Spinello Aretino, where one of that artist's sons, Forzore, is described as a goldsmith especially excelling in works of *niello.* This Forzore, we learn in another place,* was the scholar of one Maestro Cione, who flourished, we are told, about 1330. This is at all events sufficient to carry the art back as early as the fourteenth century; and it is probable that it was in use long before; for Vasari never speaks of it as a new art. Brunelleschi, the celebrated architect, born 1377, was in his youth a goldsmith, and was admired for his works of *niello,* and, upon the whole, there is reason to conclude that Finiguerra was preceded by many others who practised that mode of workmanship, which, perhaps, from a very early period, had constituted a distinguished part of the employment of every goldsmith.†

* Vita d'Agostino et Agnolo, Scultori Sanesi.

† *Mr. Bartsch* informs us (Peintre Graveur, tom. xiii. pp. 2. 36.) upon the autho-

That Vasari was silent respecting so many of these artists, amounts only to this; that he did not think their productions called for especial notice; and it is probable that even Finiguerra himself, notwithstanding his great excellence in the above-mentioned art, and his pretensions as a draftsman and a sculptor, would have been despatched with the short eulogium bestowed on him in the Life of Pollajuolo, (an eulogium which is soon afterwards insidiously made the occasion of heaping greater honours on Pollajuolo at Maso's expense,) but for his discovery of Chalcography. Nay, perhaps, but for that discovery, works of *niello*, which gave rise to it, would scarcely have obtained a mention. As for Baccio Baldini, his name but once appears; and his prints, now so much sought after by collectors, are got rid of in a single line, without a description of even one of them.

The reason for all this is to be found in the prodigious number of artists of every denomination, with which all Tuscany, but especially Florence, abounded, even as early as the commencement of the fourteenth century; a number so great, that had Vasari minutely described the works of each individual, his writings must have been extended to at least four times their present bulk; to say nothing of the professors of painting, sculpture, and architecture, who flourished from that period, to the time in which he wrote, throughout every state of Italy.

Working in *niello* was, therefore, practised in Florence, and, perhaps, in most other parts of Italy, long before Maso distinguished himself; and it was, we are told, the custom of those who exercised that art, to take sulphur casts from their engravings, previous to filling them with the *niello*.

rity of *Lessing* (Collectaneen zur Litteratur. tom. xii. article *Niellum*) that the art of working in niello was practised in France as early as the seventh century. He adds, that *Theophilus monachus*, who lived in the twelfth century, has left detailed instructions for the practice of that art, in his work entitled: *Diversarum artium schedula*. The work of Theophilus, he informs us, was published, for the first time, by *Christian Leiste*, after a MS. in the library at Wolfenbuttel.

"From this practice," says Vasari, "the art of engraving and "printing copper-plates was derived." Now the only reasonable interpretation to be given of this sentence is, that some one of those who were accustomed to make these sulphurs, as memorials of their works on silver, discovered by accident—for almost all great discoveries have been made by accident—that impressions could also be taken from engraved plates on damped paper. Vasari's concluding words are, it is true, "so the printers" (that is the printers of copper-plates) "found out the method of taking off "impressions from engravings on copper, with a press, as is now the "custom:" but these words, if indeed they are any other than a mere antithesis, can only mean, that the method of taking off impressions from engraved plates by means of a common roller, or other imperfect instrument, having been discovered, they—the printers—improved and perfected the apparatus necessary for such a purpose: for until the mode of printing engraved plates was discovered, there could be no persons whose occupation it was to print them; and, indeed, until after the discovery was made known, no engraved plates left the work-shop of the goldsmith unless when filled with *niello*, and, consequently, not in a state admitting of such an operation. Besides, we have no evidence that Finiguerra himself did not become a printer of copper-plate engravings; and the expression "so the printers," &c. may, therefore, refer to him and his immediate followers.

The person who made the discovery must, according to all fair hypotheses, have been a goldsmith. Such, Vasari informs us, in the introduction to his life of Marc Antonio, was really the case, and that that goldsmith was Maso Finiguerra.

We are there expressly told, that, "the art of engraving and printing copper-plates, (dell' intagliare le stampe) had its beginning with Maso Finiguerra, or came from Finiguerra, (venne da Maso Finiguerra) about the year 1460: for that that artist made sulphur casts of all the things that he engraved in silver, which were intended to be filled with *niello*, before he introduced the *niello*;

that he also took impressions from his engravings with a tint made of soot and oil, upon damped paper, by means of a wooden roller which he pressed over it: and lastly, that the impressions so produced looked like drawings done with a pen." Vasari then proceeds to inform us, that Finiguerra was followed in the practice of engraving and taking impressions from his plates on paper by Baccio Baldini; that afterwards the secret became known to Mantegna, at Rome; that it also found its way into Germany, and so forth.

To the question—when did Maso make this discovery? it may be no easy matter to give an answer. For it is, I think, evident, that the year 1460, or thereabouts, from which Vasari dates the commencement of chalcography ("il principio dell' intagliare le stampe") does not refer to the period at which he supposed Maso to have first discovered the mode of taking impressions of his engravings on silver by means of a roller, but to the epoch when engravings on copper, or other metals, began to be executed and used for the common purposes of printing and publication. Some of the Italian writers, indeed, insist, that what is said by Vasari of his taking impressions of *all the things that he engraved in silver*, previously to his filling them with *niello*, is not only to be taken literally, but that it is to be considered as applying equally to his practice in both the methods above described; the sulphur and the paper: thus Lanzi observes: "that as it appears "from the books of the Arte de' Mercante, that, in 1452, he re- "ceived payment for his *pax* in the Church of S. Giovanni, and as "he was then a master of experienced abilities, and thoroughly "practised in his art, it is fair to suppose, with Gaburri and Tira- "boschi, that as he 'made proofs of *all* the works that he engraved "in silver,' (tutte le cosi che intagliò in argento) he must have "used that mode from 1440, or, perhaps, a few years before; and "here, therefore," says he, "we have the beginnings of chalco- "graphy in Florence, very clearly deducible from history."*

* "Storia Pittorica," tom. i. p. 87.

This mode of reasoning may not, perhaps, entirely satisfy the reader; for although Vasari asserts that Maso took impressions of all his works in silver—that assertion, even allowing it in its full extent, appears to refer to the impressions taken with earth and sulphur only; he does not say that he took impressions of all his works of silver on damped paper. The former mode, as we before observed, was doubtless practised by goldsmiths who preceded him: the latter was discovered by himself, accidentally, in the course of the varied operations which his profession required: for to infer otherwise, would be to suppose either that he possessed this art intuitively from his birth, or that he had been taught it by some one who practised it before him: the first an absurdity; the second in opposition to history, as well as to all other evidence of which we are possessed; since we find no traces of such a practice, either in Florence or in any other part of Europe, previous to the time in which Finiguerra flourished.

It seems probable, nevertheless, that the Italian writers, in placing Finiguerra's discovery a few years prior to 1440, are not far from the truth; and our reasons for such an opinion will the better appear, when we have collected together the few circumstances of his life which are on record, and accompanied them with such an examination of the style of his works, as may furnish a reasonable ground of conjecture as to the period when he flourished, and the school from which he derived his professional education.

Could we place implicit trust in Baldinucci, we should need little other information as to the last of these particulars.

"At the time when the celebrated Masaccio lived in Florence," says that writer, "teaching the true method of painting, many "artists, benefiting by his instructions and by the imitation of his "works, became excellent. One of these was Tommaso, called "Maso Finiguerra, a Florentine goldsmith, who designed with a "pen and acquarella so admirably, that his drawings are, perhaps, "not inferior to those of any artist of that period. Indeed I my-"self can testify that he drew a great deal, as the designs by his

" hand, which were in the collection formed by the late Cardinal " Leopold, of Tuscany, were, of themselves, extremely numerous; " and the best of them, in every respect, so like those of Masaccio, " that I have no hesitation in affirming, although I have not found " it recorded by any writer whatever, that he was the disciple of " that great artist, by whom, indeed, all those who began to dis- " tinguish themselves at that early period, were directed in the true " principles of art."*

These drawings of Maso, now in the ducal collection at Florence, I have seen,† and think them well deserving the character Baldinucci has given of them. They are principally studies of single figures, designed with a pen upon white paper, and slightly shaded with bistre or Indian ink; and they possess, in an eminent degree, that correctness of outline, and simplicity of manner, which especially characterize the works of Masaccio; qualities which, after the middle of the fifteenth century, were too often bartered, by the artists of Florence, for a style of less purity; particularly in their draperies, which were frequently perplexed with small and artificial folds, and trivial ornaments, and assumed an air of flutter, very unlike the tranquil dignity observable in those of that justly esteemed master.

From the great resemblance of style amongst so many of the Florentine artists who lived at the same time, however, this sort of argument cannot be deemed sufficient to support Baldinucci's hypothesis, as to the identical master by whom Maso was instructed; although it may go a good way, especially when aided by other evidence, in enabling us to determine to what epoch of the Floren-

* *Baldinucci*, " Notizie de' professori del disegno," &c. tom. iv. pp. 1-2.

† *Zani*, who has examined them more recently, informs us, (" Materiali," &c. p. 118, note 33) that they are about fifty-six in number, and that some of them represent the figures of eagles; one amongst which, in particular, is, he says, " superbly drawn." Each of these drawings, he adds, is marked at bottom with a sort of star, or asterisk; which, he is of opinion, was added, not by Finiguerra himself, but by some ancient proprietor of the drawings.

tine school he properly appertains, and the probable period of his initiation.

We learn from a letter of Baccio Bandinelli, that Finiguerra was one of those artists who assisted Lorenzo Ghiberti in finishing the celebrated bronze gates of the Baptistry at Florence; a circumstance which, although omitted by Vasari, is, nevertheless, not in opposition to his testimony. Vasari relates, that "Lorenzo was "assisted in the labour of finishing those gates with chiselled "work, after the operation of casting them in metal, by many "young men, who afterwards became excellent masters: viz.—by "Filippo Brunelleschi, Masolino da Panicale, Nicolo Lamberti, "goldsmiths; Parri Spinelli, Antonio Filareto, Paolo Uccello, "Antonio del Pollajuolo, who was then a very young lad, and by "many others." Bandinelli's mention of Maso is highly creditable to him, as it classes him with some of the best painters and sculptors of the fifteenth century; and it is remarkable, that he appears at the head of the list. "One of these," says he, "was "Maso Finiguerra, another was Desiderio" (da Setignano;) "besides whom there were Piero and Antonio del Pollajuolo, and "Andrea del Verrocchio; all of them celebrated artists in painting "and sculpture."*

It is proper, however, in this place to observe, that Ghiberti executed two pair of folding-gates of bronze for the Baptistry. The first of these, representing, in small compartments, stories of

* "Lettere sulla Pittura," &c. tom. i. pp. 74. 75. Baccio Bandinelli addressed this letter to his friend, the *Majordomo* of the grand duke, upon the occasion of its being in contemplation to employ him, in company with Benvenuto Cellini, to make certain bassi-relievi of bronze for the choir of the Duomo. He speaks of Cellini as of one ignorant of design, and only fitted to assist in the execution of the inventions of others. After naming Finiguerra, and the other old artists mentioned in the text, he affirms, that ten artists like Benvenuto would not be equivalent to one of their fingers. The severity of this censure was dictated by Baccio's hatred of Cellini, who certainly did not merit to be ranked so low. Baccio, however, could have no interest in praising Maso, and the testimony of so great an artist, as to his talents, at once places him in a rank very distinct from that of the ordinary goldsmiths.

the New Testament, was begun about 1407, and finished in 1424: the other, and most celebrated, with larger compartments from the Old Testament, was still in hand as late as 1445.* The information, therefore, contained in Baccio's letter, leaves the precise period, when Maso was employed as assistant in these works, still conjectural. But from the circumstance of his being named before Desiderio, who was one of the scholars of Donatello, and died with the reputation of a great sculptor, at the age of twenty-eight, it seems reasonable to give him the seniority; and it is probable that Desiderio was born early in the fifteenth century.†

Vasari's mention of Maso, in the beginning of the life of Antonio del Pollajuolo, has already been noticed. Antonio is there described as a person who, by the force of a powerful genius, joined to his unremitting diligence in designing from nature, and modelling figures in relief, had, at a very early age, acquired such skill in his profession of goldsmith, as to be able to enter the list with "Maso Finiguerra, a goldsmith, who at that time enjoyed a very great reputation; of which indeed he was well deserving, as there never had been known any artist who, in works of the burin, finished with *niello*, could compose and execute such a prodigious number of figures in a small space, as he did."

This competition between Maso and Antonio took place about 1450; at which time, it will not be too much to suppose the former, whose fame was then at its height, to have been forty years of age; Pollajuolo, his rival, being twenty-four: a conclusion which, if admitted, places the birth of Maso Finiguerra about 1410: and indeed, as well from the above considerations as from the style

* *Zani*, "Materiali," &c. p. 118, note 34.

† It is difficult to discover, either from Vasari or Baldinucci, the exact period at which Desiderio lived: for it appears certain that there is a considerable error of date in the account of the former writer. I think, however, upon the whole, that we are justified in placing Desiderio earlier than the Pollajuoli; more especially as his life precedes their's in Vasari's work, which is arranged chronologically.

and character of his works, there appears reason to believe that he was born earlier than that period, rather than later.

His father was, in all likelihood, the same person respecting whom Manni found an authentic document stating him to have been dead before 1426;* a document which he erroneously considered as regarding the son. That he likewise was a goldsmith, is a conjecture not unreasonable, though unsupported by evidence.

The masters of Maso were doubtless men of the same profession, in which he afterwards attained so much eminence; namely, goldsmiths and sculptors in bronze and other metals: for the term sculptor, under which Finiguerra was designated by Bandinelli, is surely not improperly applied to the artist who, after he had modelled his statue or his basso-relievo in clay or wax, and cast it in metal, had only performed half his task; it still remaining for him to put the last finish to his work—all those exquisite touches which give value to the productions of a master, by the tedious operation of the file and the chisel. But why should we search further for Maso's preceptors in the art, after we have seen him assisting in the school of Ghiberti, the most consummate artist in works of bronze and other metals, that Florence or the fifteenth century could boast; whose gates at the Baptistry were deemed by Michelangiolo not unworthy to be the gates of Paradise;† a master, in whose study so large a proportion of the Florentine youth, during forty years, imbibed those principles of art which afterwards proved unerring guides to them in the pursuit of excellence in the various professions of painting, sculpture, and architecture?

In this community of young artists, Maso was obliged assiduously to exert himself, that his improvement might keep pace with that of his companions. Moreover, the frescoes in the chapel at the church of the Carmine, which Massolino da Panicale, cut off in the flower of youth, about 1418, left scarcely begun, though begun

* *Baldinucci*, "Notizie," &c. tom. iv. p. 1. Nota del Manni.

† *Vasari*, Vita di Lorenzi Ghiberti.

with promise, had been allotted to Masaccio;* and Florence soon witnessed a style of art very unlike any thing that had been seen before; a purity and correctness of outline, a mellowness of colouring, and a perfection of imitation, especially in the heads of the figures, to which painting, it is probable, had hitherto been considered absolutely inadequate.

Among those who, in the hours of leisure, flocked to design in this Chapel, Finiguerra was certainly one of the most constant in his attendance; and, indeed, as Baldinucci observes, he so entirely possessed himself of the style of Masaccio, that he appears in his designs as if guided by the spirit of that great artist.

Finiguerra, therefore, although not the disciple of Masaccio, who was a professor of painting only, and consequently unfitted to teach the processes employed in other arts, may properly be classed among those artists who, immediately struck with the perfection of the new system of art which Masaccio had just then introduced, made it, ever after, the model of his imitation, and the foundation of his practice. For although the arts he professed, required, in the exercise of them, a mechanism and process very different from painting; still, painting and sculpture being, both of them, governed by the same great fundamental principles of design, many of the beauties which were displayed by Masaccio in productions of the one art, were found applicable to the other; insomuch, indeed, that Vasari assures us that the painters and sculptors of the time, alike, benefited by the study of Masaccio's frescoes. Besides, working in *niello* was, in its effect, similar to painting, except that it admitted not of colouring.

Of Maso's works in silver, none are now known excepting the Pax of "the Assumption," in the Church of S. Giovanni, finished in 1452, and already so often mentioned. For although Baldi-

* There is no small confusion with respect to dates in Vasari's accounts of Massolino and Masaccio. I follow Baldinucci, who has taken pains to correct the oversights of Vasari in such matters, and not unfrequently with success.

nucci tells us that some of the bassi-relievi of the history of S. John the Baptist, which decorate the magnificent altar of massy silver in the same church, were executed by him, in competition with Antonio Pollajuolo, the learned Gori* appears to have found no notice of such a circumstance in the records of the time: and we may, therefore, conclude that Baldinucci had no other authority than his own arbitrary construction of the words of Vasari, who, after noticing a trial of skill between Maso and Antonio, in which, says he, "Antonio " equalled his rival in diligence, and surpassed him in design," proceeds to inform us, that Pollajuolo (not Finiguerra) was, in consequence, employed to execute some of the silver bassi-relievi on the said altar.

As consistently with the duty of impartiality, we have found it necessary to record this sentence, apparently so little to the credit of Maso Finiguerra, we ought not to omit to soften its severity, by apprising the reader that it would be no difficult task to produce similar passages, in which Vasari, out of pure zeal for the artist whose life he is then writing, who, for the time being, commonly appears the beloved of his heart, has exalted him above his neighbours, of claims at least equal; these last being treated by him with a like courtesy when it comes to their turn. As a designer of naked figures, Pollajuolo probably became, in the end, superior to Maso; whose works, being generally on a small scale, did not require nor even admit of the display of those anatomical details upon which the former set so high a value; and which, in the eyes of a Florentine painter of the middle of the sixteenth century, such as Vasari was, could not but appear paramount to every other consideration. But Maso, on the other hand, possessed a delicacy of feeling to which Pollajuolo was ever a stranger: joined, as has been before said, to a purity of style, of which too many of the Florentine artists of the latter part of the fifteenth century lost sight in the pursuit of frivolous variety and capricious ornament.

* " Thesaurus Veterum Diptychorum," tom. iii. p. 310, et seq.

Notwithstanding the positive testimony of Vasari in favour of Finiguerra, the honour of the invention of chalcography was long disputed with the Italians by the writers of other nations. It was insisted, by the adverse party, that, from the known inaccuracies* of the Aretine biographer, his authority, unsupported by other evidence, could not be deemed conclusive; and, it was urged, that no print bearing the name or cypher of Maso Finiguerra could be found; whereas Germany produced many engravings, the dates upon which bore witness to their high antiquity.

Thus the celebrated connoisseur Pierre Jean Mariette, when writing from Paris to his friend the Cav. Gaburri at Florence, after other inquiries relative to art, puts the following questions concerning Finiguerra:—" I wish also to receive from you some informa-
" tion respecting the invention of copper-plate engraving, and
" whether or not it was really discovered in Florence by means
" of Maso Finiguerra: for that which Vasari asserts does not
" appear to me to be sufficiently proved; as we see prints by the
" old masters of Germany with dates anterior to all the prints
" engraved in Italy which I have hitherto seen.† In fact I have
" not yet seen any print, either by the said Maso, or by Baccio
" Baldini. I have seen two or three by Pollajuolo, and many by
" Mantegna. It will be necessary to see some of those of Maso,
" before we can decide who was the inventor. For the present I
" have a strong prejudice against him. Do me therefore the favour

* When the great extent of Vasari's work is considered, and when it is remembered that he had not the advantage of being preceded by any one who wrote expressly upon the same subject, the verity of his account, in almost all matters of consequence, becomes rather a subject for our praise, than his occasional incorrectness, in facts of smaller import, is for our animadversion. Excessive partiality to the painters of Tuscany is another crime of which the Aretine biographer has been accused by the writers of other states of Italy. But it ought to be remembered that an author naturally dwells most upon those circumstances with which he is best acquainted; and his accusers may be reminded that they are indebted to his industry for the little information they possess of many ancient artists of their own provinces.

† *Mariette* ought to have said " which I have hitherto recognized."

" to tell me if you have seen any print by him; since it is impossible " that such things should not be found at Florence where he " worked. I cannot at all understand Vasari in that part where " he relates the manner of the discovery. You will oblige me very " much by assisting me to render that passage of his book more " intelligible."* In another letter to the same gentleman, dated Jan. 1732, he says, " I am better informed than any one as to the " rich collection of prints made by the Prince Eugene, since I " arranged and made an ample catalogue of them. There is cer- " tainly nothing among them by Maso Finiguerra; nor in the " collection of the king, which is an extremely fine one, and, " especially, rich in prints engraved by the ancient masters.

" I know, indeed, of one print, representing Hercules killing the " serpent, upon which are these letters, I. F. T.,† which, taken the " reverse way, might be read thus,—Thomas Finiguerra incidit; " but I am not satisfied with such a conjecture; whereas I have " prints by old German masters, very well known, with very " ancient dates, concerning the authenticity of which there is no " doubt. In the mean time I will suspend my judgment, and shall " be most happy if, in the ancient collections of prints of which " you tell me, you happen to meet with something certain, that may " oppose my opinion, and confirm the assertion of Vasari."‡

In Oct. 1732, Gaburri writes from Florence a very long letter in answer to Mariette's numerous inquiries. What he says upon the subject in question is as follows:—" The delay of my letter is in " consequence of my most earnest desire to give you a decided " answer to the various questions which, at different periods, you " have done me the honour of putting to me concerning our Maso " Finiguerra of Florence, the inventor of copper-plate engraving,

* " Lettere sulla Pittura," &c. tom. ii. pp. 230. 231.

† Further mention will be made of this print in a subsequent page.

‡ " Lettere sulla Pittura," tom. ii. pp. 263. 264.

" according to the attestations of Vasari and Filippo Baldinucci;
" which opinion is likewise confirmed by the senator Bonarroti, in
" his preface to the observations upon the large medals in the
" Museum of the Cardinal Carpegna.* I have then to inform you
" that, without exaggeration, I have rummaged all Florence, hoping
" to have the good fortune to discover at least one print bearing
" the name or the cypher of that artist. But, after having in vain
" searched the Museums of the Gaddi, the Niccolini, the Giraldi,
" and Covoni families, besides many other smaller collections be-
" longing to private persons, which I was also determined to examine
" for the same purpose, I have at last given the matter up in despair;
" and all that I have been able to do, has been to get a drawing made
" for you of one of the two *Paxes* which exist in our most ancient
" church of S. Gio. Battista, where is the Baptismal Font. Of
" these *Paxes* Vasari makes mention, and also Filippo Baldinucci,
" who speaks of them in the Preface to his treatise upon engraving
" in copper. They are not however both of them the work of
" Maso Finiguerra; one of them having been made by Matteo di
" Giovanni Dei, who was also a goldsmith; which latter I do not
" send you, but only the other, which alone is by the said Fini-
" guerra.

" On the back of the drawing you will find written the name of
" the author; and, besides this, I send with it every document
" respecting these *Paxes;* which information is contained in the
" archives of S. Giovanni, and has been kindly communicated to
" me by the very learned Doctor Anton. Francesco Gori, a most
" worthy priest, who has published works of profound erudition.
" From these documents you may at least learn the exact epoch of
" time in which the works they refer to were executed; and thence
" draw the conclusion, that from Finiguerra's practice of working
" in *niello,* which was about 1450, (though we may suppose the dis-

* In the passage already referred to at the beginning of this Chapter.

" covery to have taken place a few years before,) the art of chalco-
" graphy had its origin, conformably to what is said by the before-
" mentioned writers. Certain it is, that I cannot believe the prints
" which are in the Dante, printed by Niccolo della Magna, to
" be the works of Finiguerra; first, because Vasari opposes
" such an idea, attributing them to the hand of Sandro Botti-
" celli; and secondly, because, if they had been engraved by
" Maso, in that first manner, and printed by the hand with a
" common roller upon damped paper, they would have a more
" rude and barbarous appearance. And, indeed, to be con-
" firmed in the persuasion that the prints in the said Dante, are
" really by Sandro Botticelli, it is sufficient to confront the
" little figures in those prints, with the figures which are painted
" by him in the altar-picture of the chapel of the noble family
" Palmieri; the descendants of the famous Matteo Palmieri, who, to-
" gether with his wife, is pourtrayed in the picture; both on their
" knees. Upon an examination of the above-mentioned picture,
" which is in the church of S. Pier Maggiore, in this city, we im-
" mediately discover, in every part, a manner corresponding to the
" said prints. It is, indeed, true, that the deceased Sig. Abate
" Antonmaria Salvini asserted, as a thing most certain, that there
" was a Dante with figures by Maso Finiguerra, and I am told
" the same, as well by Sig. Gaetano Bernestadt, as by Sig. Dottor
" Biscioni, who say they have often heard it asserted. Indeed, I pos-
" sess, in my own collection, a few prints belonging to the different
" cantos of the Commedia of Dante, which are, in every respect,
" (in tutto e per tutto) different from those which are said to be, and
" really are by Sandro Botticelli; but they have neither name,
" cypher, nor date, and as they are in a manner extremely rude
" and bad, they may, perhaps, be those which belong to the im-
" pression of Dante mentioned by Salvini."* What this edition of Dante is, of which Gaburri here speaks, I know not; but I

* " Lettere sulla Pittura," &c. tom. ii. pp. 367. 368.

suppose, with Lanzi,* that the prints he describes as being in his own collection, and so inferior to those which are found at the two first cantos of the edition of 1481, were no other than the additional prints which, in some copies of that edition, are found pasted at the heads of the third and following cantos.

In this research we find Mariette expecting, that to satisfy his doubts on the subject, his friend should discover a print, bearing the name or cypher of Maso Finiguerra. A little consideration ought to have made him sensible that such an expectation was most unwarrantable. He states that he had seen many engravings by Andrea Mantegna: had he seen one with the name or cypher of that artist? No: it was by his knowledge of Andrea's manner, acquired from his drawings and pictures, and, perhaps, still more from the general notoriety of that artist's prints, that he distinguished them. He had seen two or three by Pollajuolo: one print, indeed, by that artist, bears his name at length; all the others, which are supposed to be by him, that I know of, are without either name or cypher. He tells Gaburri that he had seen no prints by Baldini, whose works are believed to be very numerous, (and, of course, some of them were in the two great collections which he named) because he found none with the name or initials of that artist; and not mentioning Sandro Botticelli, we may suppose that he had not seen, or had not recognised, any by that master, although he might have learned from Vasari's life of Botticelli, that the plates in the Dante of 1481, a work which, as it is not of extreme rarity, must have been in the King of France's library, were engraved by Sandro's own hand.

Gaburri, on the other hand, in his search after Finiguerra's prints, appears to have been wholly unmindful of the character which Vasari gave of that artist; and forgetting that he, as well as others,

* Storia Pittorica, tom. i. p. 83. Lanzi was of opinion that these additional prints were executed by an artist of inferior abilities after the book was printed, and that the two first vignettes only are by Botticelli. I shall examine into the propriety of this opinion, when I come to speak of Botticelli.

might have acquired great skill in the management of the burin; long before the art of taking the impressions of engraved plates on paper was even thought of, seems, in the general rummage which he instituted at Florence, to have expected to find productions designed and engraved in a very rude and barbarous taste, as well as badly printed; and probably, in his hurry, with such an impression upon his mind, passed over the very monuments he was looking for.

It never occurred to him that he might answer the objections of his correspondent, by observing that very few of the most ancient engravers of Italy marked their plates with cyphers or monograms; and that among the numerous prints of the early Florentine engravers, in particular, one only, by Antonio Pollajuolo, bears the name of its author. As to the pretended attestation of Baldinucci, and the confirmation of Finiguerra's claims by Bonarroti, Mariette was sufficiently well read upon the subject, to know that the one and the other had no other evidence in support of their assertions or opinions, than the account given by Vasari; and that, consequently, the whole question still rested upon the credibility of Vasari alone, in a matter wherein the ancient dates upon several engravings executed in Germany or the Low Countries, appeared to furnish a reasonable ground for doubt.

Mariette, therefore, remained of his first opinion, notwithstanding that, it is now ascertained, an undoubted impression by Finiguerra was under his own key; and some of the writers of Italy* themselves, began to fear that the pretensions of their country to the invention of chalcography, rested upon a very precarious foundation; whilst others framed the improbable hypothesis, that the art was discovered in Germany and in Italy, about 1460, by two artists, who were each ignorant of the other's good fortune.

The Baron Heineken, one would imagine, had never read the

* Particularly *Bottari*, although himself a Florentine.—Vide *Lanzi*, "Storia Pittorica," tom. i. p. 87.

passage relative to Finiguerra, in Vasari's life of Pollajuolo, or the just eulogium passed upon him in Baldinucci, when he treated him as a common goldsmith, from whom nothing was to be expected but pieces of foliage and grotesques. After speaking of the failure of Gaburri and Mariette in their attempts to discover Maso's prints, he says: "It is, nevertheless, still probable that, among the quantity of ancient prints of foliage and grotesques, engraved, most certainly, by the Italian goldsmiths, there may be some of the productions of this artist. Indeed there are two little pieces of this kind, which are marked MF. and are in a style of engraving quite distinct from that of Marc Antonio; insomuch, that we may suppose the cypher to signify Maso Finiguerra. I must, at the same time, however, confess that it is a mere conjecture."*

Our countryman, Strutt, copied, as not improbably a production of Maso's burin, a small print, then in the collection of Dr. Monroe; in which is represented, on the right, a naked figure of Hercules supporting the universe, and, on the left, an old man seated at a table, and, apparently, employed in engraving on a minute circular plate. On the table, Mr. Strutt discovered something resembling the initial letter F. The identity of this letter F, however, is, at best, doubtful, and it is now ascertained that the print in question† is one of several engravings, which were executed in the same rude manner, by an artist who, if we can credit Bartsch,‡ lived as late as 1515; and who, perhaps, adopted a mode of engraving which had then gone out of fashion, with the intention of deceiving the connoisseurs of his day; as Goltzius, it is well known, did, with success, in later times. Certain it is, that his prints bear the appearance of great antiquity.

It is not a great many years since a discovery was made, which, although it did not go the length of confirming Finiguerra's title to

* "Idée Générale," p. 140.

† This print, with several others by the same artist, is now in the collection of the British Museum. They will be spoken of in a subsequent page.

‡ "Peintre Graveur," tom. xiii. p. 408, et seq.

the invention in question, was, nevertheless, upon the whole, very much calculated to strengthen the authority of Vasari; since, from the peculiarity attending it, it could not but be allowed to be a strong presumptive evidence that that author did not write merely from hearsay, but that he himself had seen proofs of works of *niello*, on paper, ascribed to Finiguerra. "Sig. Antonio Armano, "of Bologna," says Lanzi, "a very great judge of prints, was led "to suspect, from the words of Vasari, that these proofs might be "confounded with pen-drawings: he searched for them in many "collections of designs, and found several proofs of works of niello, "by anonymous goldsmiths of the fifteenth century.* These "curious specimens are now preserved in the very interesting col- "lection of early prints which was formed by the late Count Gia- "como Durazzo, formerly the Imperial Ambassador at Venice, "and which has since devolved to his nephew, the Marquis "Girolamo.

"Many of these," continues the same writer, "came out of the "ancient collection of the Gaddi† family, at Florence; and are by "artists inferior to Finiguerra, excepting two, which do not seem "unworthy of his burin. To them were afterwards added not a "few by artists of other schools of Italy. Their origin is sometimes "discovered by their style of design; sometimes, with more cer- "tainty, by inscriptions, or other unequivocal marks. Upon one "of them, representing a nativity, for example, we read, in cha- "racters the reverse way, '*Dominus Philippus Stancharius fieri* "*fecit;*' where the family named, added to other circumstances, "indicates Bologna. A small print represents a woman who is "turned towards a cat, and has this inscription, likewise in cha-

* I have, myself, indeed, more than once, heard Armano relate the story.

† The Cav. Gaddi was one of the first noblemen of Italy, who possessed a proper relish for the original designs of the great masters. Many interesting letters addressed to him upon the subject of his collections in this way, by the different agents whom he employed to make purchases for him, are to be found in the "Lettere sulla Pittura," &c.

" racters reversed, *va in la Caneva;* and on another we read, *Man-*
" *tengave Dio;* both Lombard or Venetian, as the dialect evinces.
" From all this we may argue, that the words of Vasari, in which
" he ascribes to Finiguerra the practice of proving his works before
" he filled the engraved cavities with *niello,* cannot be limited to
" him only, or to his school. It, indeed, appears that that mode
" was used by Caradosso* (of Milan) and other excellent artists of
" Italy, as a very important part of their art; and that they likewise
" were directed by these proofs, and not by chance, in the finishing
" of their works of *niello.* Nor will it be enough to oppose the
" silence of Vasari as to this point. That he was not sufficiently ac-
" quainted with the history of the Venetian and Lombard artists
" has been often, with justice, objected to him; and if he was
" thus uninformed relative to their painting, how much more
" may we suppose him to have been ignorant of their engraving.

" The proofs therefore of the workers in *niello,*" continues Lanzi,
" are found in all parts of Italy, and are especially known by the
" direction of the inscriptions upon them, which, being written from
" left to right in the original plates, appear in the impressions, as in
" oriental writings, from right to left; and in the same manner the
" other parts of the print are reversed. There are likewise other
" marks by which they are to be distinguished. Being printed
" with the hand, or with a roller, they have no mark of the plate;
" nor must we expect to find in them that precision and clearness
" in the strokes, which the press afterwards gave to the impressions
" of engravings. They are also distinguished by the tint with which
" they are printed, which was generally soot mixed with oil, or
" some other very light colour:" but this and the last are very uncertain characteristics, being indeed generally applicable to the very early impressions of the most ancient Italian engravings, which

* Caradosso is briefly mentioned by Vasari, in the life of Bramante, and appears to have flourished about 1500. Lanzi has omitted to give us his authority for the assertion, that he was accustomed to take the impressions of his works of *niello.*

were taken off before a proper press and good printing ink were discovered. " It has been conjectured that the silversmiths were " likewise accustomed to make similar proofs even of their works " *a graffito*, and others in which *niello* was not used. Be this as it " may, these proofs from their works were preserved in their " studies, and in those of their scholars, to whom they might serve " as models; and by these means some of them have remained to " our days."*

But although the practice of proving their works of *niello* appears to have been common among the Italian goldsmiths of the fifteenth century; still, among the proofs which have been found, none, according to Lanzi, seem to have pretensions to an antiquity higher than 1440, about which period it is contended that Maso Finiguerra discovered the method of taking impressions from his engravings in silver. The opinion of Lanzi upon this subject is chiefly grounded upon the inscriptions found upon many of these proofs, which are always in Roman letters, whereas those characters did not, he says, return into general use in Italy until about that epoch. Nor is the barbarous taste of several of them a proof of their more remote antiquity. " There are, it is true," says that excellent writer, among those in the Durazzo Collection, " proofs " of *niello* of a style of design more rude than that of Maso, and " perhaps of schools distinct from the Florentine: but, because more " rude, are they, on that account, more ancient? Maso, and the " Florentine artists who succeeded Masaccio, had, in 1440, already " improved their style: but can we say the same of other schools? " Besides, are we sure that the silversmiths, from whom these " proofs came, selected the designs of the best masters; and that the " Bolognese, for example, did not copy a Pieta of Jacopo Avanzi; " the Venetians, a Madonna of Jacobello del Fiore? The more dry, " the more rude, or the more ugly, cannot therefore be brought " against Finiguerra as a proof of more remote antiquity: else we

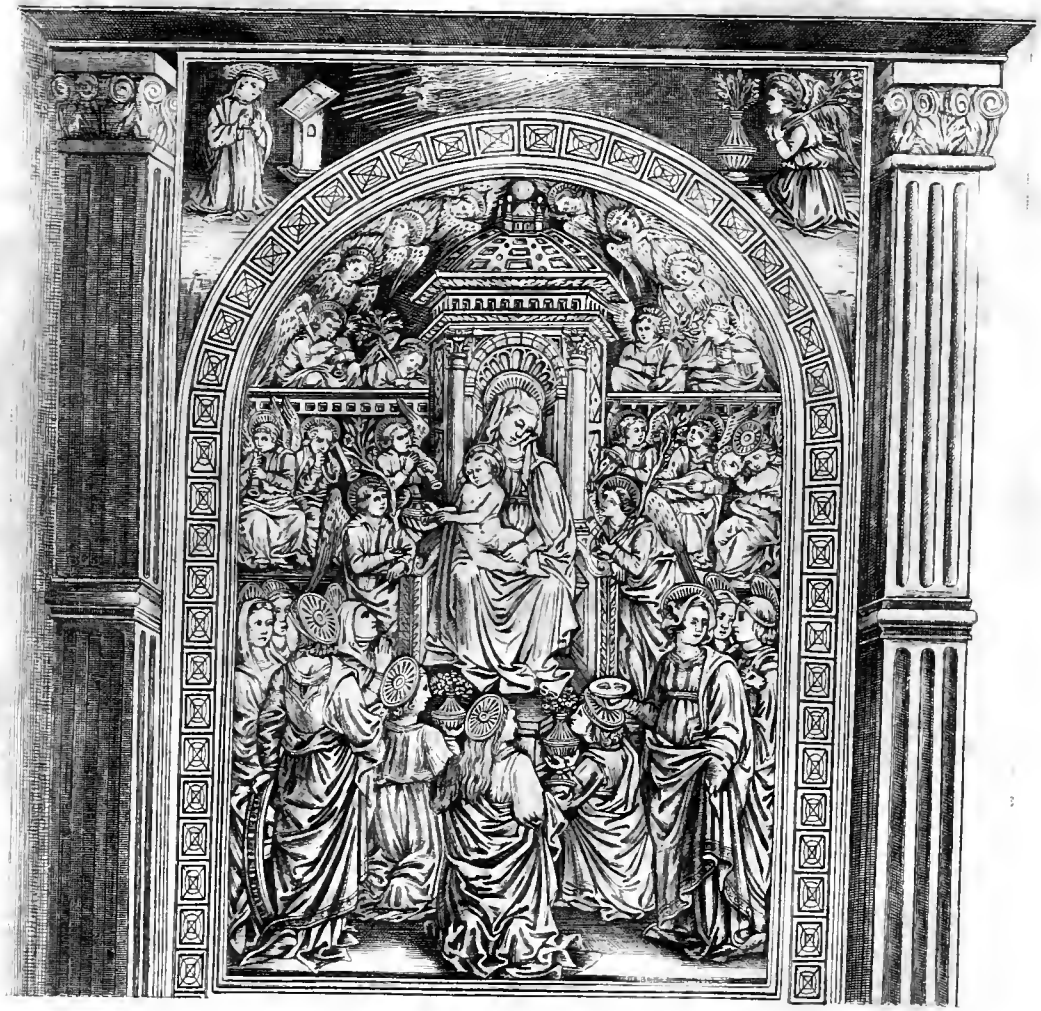
* Lanzi, " Storia Pittorica," tom. i. pp. 79. 80. 81.

" should fall into the entertaining sophism of Michele Scalza, who " affirmed that the Baronci* were the most ancient inhabitants of " Florence, and of the whole world, because they were the most " deformed."† Finiguerra, therefore, until some better evidence is produced of the more remote antiquity of the custom among the goldsmiths of other parts of Italy, seems still to have the best claim to the honour of the discovery.

Of the proofs taken by Finiguerra on paper, from his works of *niello*, some have supposed there exist specimens in the collection of the gallery at Florence. It is possible, as Lanzi observes, that one or two of those in the Durazzo Cabinet may be by him. Nor will I omit to mention, in this place, that I myself have for many years possessed a small print which was extracted from a book of drawings, and which I consider to be, without doubt, the proof of a work of *niello* of a Florentine artist of the middle of the fifteenth century. It was probably the proof taken of one of these *Paxes*, and in every respect corresponds so exactly with the character given us of Finiguerra's productions by Vasari and other writers, that I scarcely hesitate to pronounce it the work of that extraordinary artist.

It represents the Madonna seated on a magnificent throne, with the infant Saviour on her lap: on each side of her is an angel standing with a lily in his hand, the emblem of virginity, awaiting her commands. Behind are six other angels, three on each side of the throne, seated on benches, and playing on musical instruments; and above are four more of those celestial attendants, and six cherubims. On the plane beneath are ten female saints; amongst whom S. Catharine is distinguished by her wheel, S. Clara by her monastic habit, S. Mary Magdalen by her long hair and the vase of ointment, S. Lucia by her eyes in the dish, and S. Agnes by her lamb: the whole forming, in a space of little more than four inches in height, by three in width, a composition of no less than thirty figures.

* *Boccaccio*, " Decamerone,"—Giornata vi. Novella 6. † *Lanzi*, tom. i. p. 98.



MASO FINIGUERRA.

From the original in the Possession of the Author.

This little picture, for I may so term it, is semicircular at top, and is bounded by a rich frame studded with precious stones. On each side is a pilaster of the Corinthian order, supporting a frieze, or cornice, the upper part of which was perhaps unfinished at the time the artist took this proof; and in the two spandles, over the arch of the picture, is introduced the Annunciation of the Virgin. The lower part of the architectural decoration, where it is possible there may have been an inscription, is wanting.

Upon a careful examination of this work, we shall discover in it all those qualities for which Finiguerra was, above every other goldsmith of his time, so eminent. The figures, notwithstanding their extremely minute proportions, are drawn with great correctness and purity of style; and, in their draperies especially, bear a strong resemblance to the figures of Masaccio, of whom Baldinucci considers him to have been the disciple. They are judiciously varied in their attitudes, and so skilfully disposed, that it would be perhaps impossible to point out any composition of that age, in which fulness and perspicuity are so happily united. As a work of the burin, it evinces the greatest delicacy of hand, and incredible diligence.

That it is of a period not later than 1450, I am strongly of opinion. About that time Botticelli and others began to introduce a style of drapery more varied, but less pure, and which, by degrees, became more and more frittered into many small serpentine folds, very unlike the simplicity of the school of Masaccio. Moreover the glories round the heads of the saints and angels, which are here represented solid, and with excavated rays, a remnant of the custom of the fourteenth century, were by most of the Florentine artists, who succeeded that epoch, either entirely omitted, or indicated only with one or two simple lines. Brunelleschi had, shortly before, introduced in Florence a taste for the architectural orders of Greece and Rome, which often, in the works of inferior architects of the time, displayed itself in an uncouth mixture of Grecian and Gothic ornament; of which the throne of the Madonna, and the horizontal

mouldings by which the pilasters in this little print are divided, may be produced as examples.

That it is the proof of a work of *niello* is sufficiently evident: there is, indeed, no inscription upon it, which, by exhibiting the letters reversed, might, according to Lanzi's remark, distinguish it from other prints; but there are other marks, which decidedly prove that the whole composition is in a direction opposite from what the artist intended: thus the little angels, who are playing on musical instruments, hold the bow of the violin, or strike the chords of the guitar, with the left hand instead of the right. The mode, in which it is printed, likewise corresponds exactly with the description given by Lanzi of the specimens in the Durazzo collection: it was evidently taken off by a common roller, or other imperfect method of printing, with a tint of little consistency, like that produced with soot and oil; and is, in point of impression, very irregular and defective throughout: the work, in some places, being scarcely perceptible; in others, pretty distinct. The paper, upon which it is printed, is extremely thin, and appears to have been oiled all over: this was possibly a part of the artist's process, either that it might acquire a shining appearance like metal, or that, the impression becoming transparent, he might, on the other side of the paper, be enabled to view his figures in the same direction as in the silver. After all, I do not positively assert it to be the work of Finiguerra, although the more I have examined it, the more I have felt strengthened in that opinion. A comparison of it with the Pax in the church of S. Giovanni, at Florence, may, at some future time, ascertain the truth or fallacy of my conjecture. Meanwhile the copy, which is here given of it, may not prove unacceptable to the reader.

Thus had I written some months before I was acquainted with the very interesting account published by Zani, and accompanied by a correct copy of an undoubted print by Maso Finiguerra, which he had the good fortune to discover at Paris—one of the impressions that Maso took from his celebrated Pax of 'the Assumption,' before he finished it with the *niello*. The opportunity of

making the desired comparison was now in my power, and I saw, with satisfaction, that my conjectures respecting the print above described, were well founded. Indeed the resemblance between it and the print copied in Zani, is so striking, that the person* from whom I first received intelligence of that writer's publication, and who had, several times, previously seen the print in my possession, thought erroneously, as he assured me, upon first viewing Zani's copy, that the original at Paris, from which it had been taken, could be no other than a duplicate impression of the same plate with my own.

But although it appears most evident, from the comparison, that the print just described, and that at Paris, are alike the productions of Finiguerra, still, upon a careful examination, there will be found, in the former, every mark of a considerable priority of date. Not to enter into various minute distinctions between them, it may be sufficient to observe, that the folds of the draperies in that print, are designed and executed with a dryness of manner from which the latter is almost wholly exempt. In the print of 'the Assumption,' the draperies are cast in a bolder style, and the smaller folds are marked with great tenderness, so as to appear, as it were, subservient to the larger ones; by which means the masses of light are preserved, the figures have greater relief, and the whole acquires a certain breadth of effect, which is far from unpleasing. Moreover, the former print is, as I have already said, feebly and imperfectly printed, whereas the latter, as we shall hereafter find, is described as being very well printed.

From these considerations, I feel little hesitation in pronouncing that the print above described is the impression of a work engraved by Maso some years before he executed 'the Pax of the

* This person was Mr. Thomas Dodd, to whom, as well as to Mr. Samuel Woodburne, (both gentlemen extremely conversant with ancient engravings, and, indeed, dealers in those articles of virtú) I had several times, before the arrival of Zani's book in England, shewed the print in my possession, and also various portions of a MS. dissertation, which I had composed respecting it, with the intention of speedy publication.

Assumption;' and, indeed, I should judge it to be of a date not later than 1445.

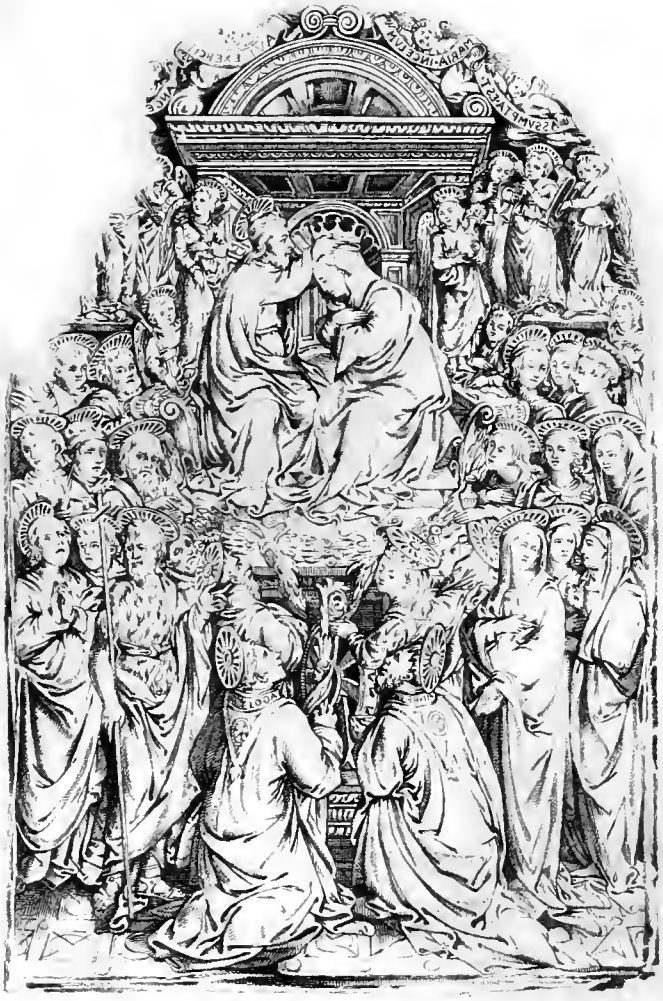
Zani's most interesting discovery shall be related in his own words. The rhapsody and enthusiasm with which he expresses himself, will be pardoned in an old man, who had, at length, attained the darling object, to the pursuit of which his whole life had been devoted.*

After mentioning the sulphur which he had seen at Leghorn, in the possession of Seratti, he proceeds to speak of his journey to Paris. "This journey," says he, "was undertaken by me in "October, 1797; and on the twenty-first day of November, in the "same year, the sixth day of my labours in the National Cabinet, "heaven permitted me to discover, in the third volume of the "engravings of the ancient masters, a print by Maso Finiguerra; "the identical impression which he himself took off, after† he "had made the before-mentioned sulphur taken from the silver "Pax, now at the Church of S. Giovanni; before he introduced "the *niello*. My pen is wholly inadequate to express the excess "of my astonishment and joy in those first and fortunate moments; "joy, however, which was soon succeeded by the painful appre-"hension that I might be deceived.

"The superb sulphur which I had seen at Leghorn, I remem-"bered, was in the same style; the subject was the same, namely, "'the coronation of the Virgin,' called, also, 'the Assumption;' "the composition was similar, and I observed the same exquisite "beauty in the figures: nevertheless, finding the print a good deal "darkened in some places, and torn at one corner, I was not sa-"tisfied. At length, after an attentive examination, I remarked

* I had the pleasure of being acquainted with Zani, about 1793, at Rome. He had then been many years employed in researches respecting early engraving.

† One might suppose, from this expression, that Zani, after the example of his friend Seratti, had adopted the extraordinary opinion of Baldinucci, that Maso's impressions on paper were taken from his sulphurs, and not from the plates themselves.



MASO FINIGUERRA.

In original in the National Institute at Paris.

" that the inscription on the scroll held by the two little angels at " the top of the composition, ASSVMPTA EST MARIA IN " CELVM, was reversed; and having discovered the titles of the " two Saints on their knees, AGOSTI, ANBRUS, likewise in " characters the reverse way, I became thoroughly convinced that " I had found a print, and not either a drawing or a tracing. The " suspicion, however, that this print might have been copied and " engraved from the original Pax, by some anonymous artist, " curbed my joy, and prevented me from making known my dis- " covery to any one.

" After having continued my labours in that magnificent col- " lection for six months, I went to see the prints in the possession " of Mr. Alibert, one of the first print-merchants of Paris; and, upon " opening a portfolio, I observed, pasted upon the first sheet, two " vignettes from the famous Dante of 1481, an amorous subject by " an anonymous German artist, and above, a design, with a broad " margin, under which was written as follows: 'This is the design " exact, and careful in every part, and of the same dimensions, of " the Silver Pax, which was gilt, enamelled,* and worked in *niello*, " by Maso Finiguerra, and is preserved in the church of S. Gio- " vanni, at Florence; of which Vasari speaks, especially in the " life of Marc Antonio Raimondi; and Baldinucci, in his treatise " on the Art of Engraving on Copper. In its weight it corresponds " with the authentic record, which Ant. Francesco Gori, public " reader of history to the Florentine Academy, discovered in " the great journal, marked A A. 1452, preserved in the archives " of the said Church. Its weight is fifty-five ounces, and eleven " denari.'

* Many writers have erroneously confounded works of *niello* with such as were executed in enamel; and, amongst the rest, Mr. Strutt, in his Dictionary of Engravers.—The enamel, which is here spoken of, was probably used in small compartments of the ornamental frame by which the engraved plate was surrounded. The union of engraving, *niello*, enamel, and chiselled work, was not unfrequent in the same piece of plate.

" As I contemplated with avidity this design, which presented " the subject in a contrary direction to the print that I had seen " in the National Cabinet, and, of consequence, with the letters " of the inscription, ASSVMPTA, &c. in their proper order, joy " once more took possession of my heart, of which she remained " absolute mistress. The correspondence between Mariette and " Gaburri, flashed across my mind, and after I had put many " questions to Mr. Alibert, I discovered that this was the identical " drawing, which the Italian amateur had sent from Florence to " his friend at Paris. I also learned that the memorandum with " which it was accompanied, besides the remarks under the two " vignettes of Dante, was written by the hand of Mariette, who " had, doubtless, copied it from the original memorandum by " Ant. Francesco Gori, sent him by his friend Gaburri.*

" The generous merchant most courteously presented me with " the drawing, and I instantly flew with it to the National Cabinet, " that I might compare it with the print; in which I found so strict " a resemblance, not only in every figure, but even in the heads and " the folds of the drapery, as, in addition to the circumstance of its " being in a direction opposite to the drawing, and its surprising " beauty in every part, soon convinced me that my eye had not " been deceived, and that my happiness was indeed well founded. " I did not lose a moment in making known my discovery to " Mr. Joly, the most obliging person possible, who has the charge " of that collection, as well as to those under him, and to several of " my friends; one of whom, the celebrated Mr. De Non, has since " engraved my portrait, representing me in the same attitude in " which he found me, with a magnifying glass in my hand, examin- " ing that print.

" Thus it pleased heaven that I should be the first to discover

* It is not very creditable to Mariette, that, notwithstanding the means which this drawing afforded him of judging of the style of Maso Finiguerra, he should have failed to discover the genuine impression, afterwards found by Zani, which all this time was preserved in the collection of the King of France, of which Mariette had the charge.

" a genuine print by Maso Finiguerra. I will not here stop to " describe it, since any person can, at his leisure, contemplate the " copy which I have given of it, engraved faithfully from the " original by the hand of a skilful artist.* It will now, I trust, be " confessed, that Vasari and Baldinucci had sufficient reason, when " they asserted, the one, that Maso Finiguerra flourished in 1460, " the other, in 1450, and that I have not been far from the truth in " supposing him born about 1418.†

" The workmanship of this *Pax*, which he probably begun in " 1451, fully shews that he must have been, at that time, not " merely a man greatly advanced in his art, but a master of high " credit and reputation. And, indeed, if such had not been the " case, he would not have been employed, by the consuls of the " Company di Calimala, in a work which was intended to serve, " not for a small church, or a simple oratory, but for the celebrated " temple of S. Giovanni, in which, at all times, the greatest " sculptors and goldsmiths of Florence have emulated each other " by the greatest exertion of their abilities. Maso therefore, " it is probable, had at this period attained the summit of his " skill.

" If any person is desirous (adds Zani) of knowing whether or not " I have discovered any other print by that great master, besides the " one of ' the Assumption' already mentioned, I answer that I have " reason to think I have found another in the same city of Paris, in " the cabinet of Mr. Borduge. This print, which is four inches in " height, by two inches, and eight lines in breadth, represents the " Virgin Mary seated upon a throne with the infant Jesus, sur-

* The copy of this print, given by Zani, is executed, with great delicacy, by a Mr. Pauquet. The characters of the heads bear every appearance of being faithful imitations of the originals; but the artist, in finishing the tender parts, has introduced dotted lines, which, I am fully persuaded, will not be found in the original; and which are, therefore, omitted in the copy here presented to the reader.

† My reasons for the opinion that Finiguerra was born as early as 1410, are already given.

" rounded by a choir of twelve angels and six seraphims, and ten " female saints; its form is arched at top according to the usage " adopted in these *Paxes*, from one of which it was taken, and the " figures are of surprising beauty, and in every respect analogous " to those in 'the Assumption.'"*

That Maso Finiguerra was the real inventor of the art of which we treat, conformably to the testimony of Vasari, is no longer a matter of doubt or inquiry; nor can the Italian writers be accused of exaggeration when they place the epoch of his discovery about 1440, or a few years before. Let us now inquire as to the probable means by which the new art was divulged, and the gradations by which it was perfected, so far as to be applicable to the useful purposes of publication.

From the simple nature of the operation required to produce an impression from an engraved plate, such a practice could not long remain confined to the work-shop of its inventor. A proof on paper being once shewn to a neighbouring goldsmith, even though the process which produced it was withheld, could not but lead to experiment; and experiment could hardly fail of success. The slightest hint, conveyed by one artist to his friend residing at a distance, sufficed to awaken ingenuity; and but little ingenuity was required, the effect being already known, to discover some simple operation, by which that effect would be, in some degree at least, obtained. Indeed from the proofs of works of *niello* in the Durazzo cabinet alone, their various styles, and the apparent antiquity of several of them, it seems probable that many years did not elapse, from the period of Maso's discovery, before the art, in this, its first state, became pretty generally practised by the workers in *niello* throughout Italy.

* *Zani*, " Materiali," &c. p. 41, et seq. From Zani's description of the print in the possession of Mr. Borduge, I was some time of opinion that it was an impression taken from the same plate as my own, but without the spandles over the arch, or the surrounding border. I learn, however, from Mr. Woodburne, who saw it during his recent visit to Paris, that the composition is different.

It is remarkable that Finiguerra himself is described as having taken off his impressions with a roller. This, it is probable, was not the first method employed by him, but a happy after-thought, which occurred to him in the course of his practice. The application of such an instrument being once adopted by him, an augmentation of its power, by the addition of a great and even pressure, was all that was required to render it an efficient apparatus, and, indeed, the best fitted of all for the purpose of taking impressions from engravings on metal. Finiguerra's first use of the roller, was virtually the first step towards the invention of the copper-plate printing press; and it is, therefore, a consideration wholly distinct from any attempts that may have been made by other Italian goldsmiths, his contemporaries, to procure impressions of their engravings, by means of friction, in imitation of the mode so long before used by the engravers on wood.

Such a mode, it is true, was not ill adapted to the purpose of taking impressions from engravings on wood; where the work, requiring to be impressed, presented itself in numerous and sharp projections, well calculated of themselves to keep the paper, which was laid on it, firm in its original situation, during the operation of rubbing it on the back with list, or with the palm of the hand.

In engravings on metal, on the contrary, where the work, which was to be transferred to the paper, was concave, the general surface of the plate itself still remaining smooth and polished, the application of friction was ill fitted to produce a clear and uniform impression. Where the plate was very small, and this was often the case with works of *niello,* the paper might indeed be held firmly extended over it; but still the violence of the friction requisite to take the impression, could not but occasion the paper to stretch in some degree during the operation. This would necessarily occasion the print to appear slurred and deficient in that clearness in the strokes, which the direct pressure of the roller was alone calculated to give to the impressions of engravings on metal; and may partly account

for the soft, but confused effect observable in many of the proofs of the ancient Italian goldsmiths.

How far Maso at length succeeded in perfecting his apparatus, it may be difficult to determine. That he greatly improved it can admit of no doubt. The necessity of an accession of weight, and thereby of power, must soon have occurred to him. This would in some degree be attained in the heavier material of which he might afterwards form his roller: a flat piece of stone or marble, held upon it whilst it passed over the plate, would render it more effective: a board, suspended from the cieling by cords, and heavily loaded with weights of lead or iron, might easily have been so arranged as to lend a very considerable pressure to the roller during the operation of impression.

There is, I think, reason to believe that, at an early period, Maso had recourse to some such expedient. The first print, which I have described, by him, in my own possession, and which I have judged to be executed about 1445, is very unequally printed, and is deficient in force of effect; nevertheless some parts of its delicate work are so clearly represented, that I cannot help thinking he must have applied some further degree of pressure to his roller, than what his hands alone could have given to it. Moreover, the impression is not slurred, or, as artists term it, printed double; an evidence that the roller passed but once over the plate, and that the plate was kept steady by some mechanical contrivance during the operation. The impression of his *Pax* of "the Assumption," discovered at Paris, and already so often mentioned, is described by a late French writer* as being well printed. "One sees," says he, "from the "clearness of the strokes of the burin, and the firmness of the

* In a treatise upon engraving, introduced at the beginning of the third volume of the "Musée de France," published by Robillard, at p. 29, note 2, Bartsch has given this interesting note at length; and has endeavoured, I think inefficiently, to reconcile the information it contains, to his own strange hypothesis, that Finiguerra took all his impressions from his sulphur casts, and not from the plates themselves.

" colour with which it is printed, that this impression must have " been taken off from the silver plate itself, when nothing was " wanting to its completion, but the introduction of the *niello*." " Strange would it be," says Bartsch, who has given us this information in a note, but had not seen the impression itself, " if this " ancient print were in reality of so much more brilliant an effect, " than the proofs taken by the workers in *niello* posterior to Finiguerra; which latter are generally of a greyish tint, and resemble " drawings done with a pen."*

However strange, such may, nevertheless, be the case; for it is by no means improbable that the goldsmiths of different cities of Italy—nay even those of Florence itself—may have imitated Finiguerra in the practice of taking impressions from works intended to be finished with *niello*, by a method of their own, and even by a common roller, moved backwards and forwards, many years before the more appropriate contrivance, adopted by Maso himself, was divulged.

This argument, better than any other that I am prepared to offer, may account for the long period which appears to have intervened —a period of perhaps not less than twenty years—between the time of Finiguerra's first discovery, and its application for the common purposes of impression and publication.

Whether, or not, by the year 1460, or thereabouts, from which Vasari dates the practice of chalcography, Finiguerra had so far succeeded in his attempts, as to construct an apparatus fitted to the ordinary purposes of printing engraved plates of various dimensions for publication; whether, or not, in short, he himself became the perfecter of his own invention, is a question upon which it may now be proper to offer a few remarks; for certain it is that about that period a tolerably efficient mode of impression was practised in Tuscany, and perhaps in some other parts of Italy.

As a circumstance not a little favourable to an opinion in the af-

* *Bartsch*, " Peintre Graveur," vol. xiii. p. 44.

firmative, it may, in the first place, be of importance to mention, that Zani saw, in the Martelli collection at Florence, a print of "the Ado- "ration of the Magi"—taken, as he supposes, from an engraved plate of silver—which, from the multiplicity, the arrangement, and the minuteness of its figures, he judged, as he tells us, the first moment he saw it, to be the production of Maso Finiguerra. In a note on this passage, he says, "I shall speak at large concerning this print in "another place;" meaning his promised and extensive work; "and I shall have justly to complain, that another impression "similar to it, and admirably preserved, was cruelly denied to me "by a picture-dealer at Rome, to whom I had candidly discovered "its value."* The spontaneous judgment of Zani, as to the author of this engraving, appears therefore to have been confirmed by his further reflection; and it will I trust be admitted, by those who are aware of the extreme rárity† of most of the very early prints of the Italian schools, that the circumstance of his having met with two similar impressions, is a strong argument in favour of the supposition that the plate, from which they were taken, was engraved for the purposes of publication, and that it was published; especially as the goldsmiths cannot reasonably be supposed to have taken more than two or three proofs from their works of *niello*. Whether or not the plate, upon which this engraving was executed, was of silver, I will not take upon me to determine; nor am I aware of any means by which Zani could be enabled, from an examination of the impression, to frame such a distinction.

The natural interpretation of Vasari's words, moreover, "Il "principio dunque dell' *intagliare le stampe* venne da Maso "Finiguerra Fiorentino circa gli anni di nostra salute 1460," appears to be, that "*the art of engraving plates for the purposes of*

* Materiali, p. 48, and note 46, p. 124.

† It is more than probable that, if all the collections of ancient prints in Europe were diligently examined for the purpose, it would be found, that of many engravings of the fifteenth century—I mean of such as there is every reason to suppose were executed for the common purposes of publication—not even two impressions are now in existence.

" *publication,* had its commencement with Finiguerra about the " year 1460;" and the expression " fu seguitato costui da Baccio " Baldini," " he was followed by Baccio Baldini," seems to have no other meaning than that Baldini practised, afterwards, what the other had practised before; and does not necessarily imply that Baldini even improved upon the method used by Finiguerra, much less that he was, as Seratti appears to have supposed, a second inventor. Now we collect from the words of Vasari, that Baldini published many engravings, although none of them are specified; it appears also from evidence, independently of Vasari's authority, (namely, the evidence of ancient prints themselves,) that the art of engraving plates of metal, for the purposes of impression, did begin to be practised in Florence about 1460. It is not reasonable to suppose that Maso should have been the last to be awakened to the importance of his own discovery, made so many years before; and, consequently, if no prints are really to be found by him, except the proofs of his works of *niello,* I should consider it as sufficient evidence of his having been dead, or superannuated, soon after the time when the publication of prints began to come into use; that is, shortly after the period just mentioned.

There appears, however, to exist some ground for the belief that the plate of the " Adoration of the Magi," of which Zani saw two impressions, must have been engraved by Maso, for the purpose of publication; and it is probable that other prints by him may in future be discovered, which have hitherto, chiefly perhaps on account of their excellence, been ascribed to the burin of later engravers. We have already noticed the change which had taken place in Finiguerra's style, between the period of his executing the plate from which the impression in my possession was taken, (which I have conjectured to be about 1445,) and the year 1451 or 1452, when he engraved the *Pax* of the Assumption. Now if we suppose him to have continued to live for eighteen or twenty years after the latter of those periods, (that is, until about 1470, when he would have been, according to our calculation, a man of about the age

of sixty, and we are absolutely without any evidence to the contrary) it will be reasonable to conclude that during so long an interval of time, a still more considerable change in his style must have taken place; occasioned by the example of contemporary artists, and the influence of that gradual revolution of taste which the school of Florence experienced after the middle of the fifteenth century. Besides, if, as we have supposed, he engraved after the year 1460, for the purpose of publication, he would naturally employ plates of a different metal from that which he had been accustomed to use for his works of *niello*, and of larger dimensions. He would, perhaps, also, adopt a less laboured style of engraving, fitted, like the prints of Pollajuolo, Mantegna, and others, to imitate the effect of drawings, shaded by parallel diagonal hatchings, according to the custom of the best Italian designers of those times: whereas in his works of *niello* it had been his ambition to counterfeit the appearance and force of highly finished miniatures executed with the pencil; an effect which could not be attained except by means of numerous and most delicate strokes of the burin, crossed in some parts in various directions; in others, so closely laid to each other, that the divisions between the strokes were often imperceptible to the naked eye.* In searching, therefore, for such engravings as Maso may have produced after the establishment of chalcography, it is obvious that we ought not to determine hastily against every print that does not, in all respects, resemble in manner, the impressions of his works of *niello*. The dexterity with which he managed the burin, joined to his knowledge of design, would have rendered the adoption of a different mode of engraving from that which he had before practised, a matter of little difficulty to him;

* It is, indeed, reasonable to suppose, that Finiguerra did not finish all his works of *niello* with this exquisite diligence; but only such as were intended, like his *paxes*, for public situations, and for which he was paid high prices: others, destined for inferior purposes, and for individuals of moderate condition, he would, doubtless, execute in a more expeditious mode of engraving; and hence the impressions, taken from some of them, might have resembled, as Vasari says they did, drawings done with a pen.

and it is probable that, if ever the latter works of his hand are ascertained, they will be found to unite to the beauty of their design, a greater share of clearness of execution, than is discoverable in most of the prints of the early Italian engravers.*

The silence of Vasari as to Finiguerra's later works of engraving, is no proof that he was ignorant of their existence; since in the introduction to his Life of Marc Antonio, he omitted to say even one word concerning the prints by Botticelli and Pollajuolo; both of whom, in the lives of those artists, he expressly tells us, engraved several prints. There can indeed be no doubt that Vasari, in his eagerness to describe the works of those whom he considered better artists, omitted to name many other early engravers, of whom, had he been aware of the curiosity of future ages, he could easily have given us some account: in proof of which, it will be enough to refer to his life of Pollajuolo—who probably engraved before Botticelli—where, after describing one of that artist's engravings, he says: "and after that he executed other prints, which "are engraved in a much better manner than those of the other "masters who had been before him." Who those other masters were, we are left to conjecture.

* There is a set of fifteen engravings of the life of the Madonna without monogram or cypher, which is classed by *Mr. Bartsch*, (vol. xiii. p. 257,)—(I hesitate not to say erroneously,) amongst the works of *Nicoletto da Modena*. *Heineken*, "Dictionnaire des Artistes," (vol. iii. p. 213,) attributes these prints to Sandro Botticelli. I have seen but two of them, one of which, "the Coronation of the Virgin," (Bartsch, No. 19,) is in my own collection. It measures eight inches and three quarters in height, by six inches and a half, and is decidedly by an artist of the fifteenth century, of the Florentine school. The design is of the best style of the period, the figures are drawn with no small degree of elegance and correctness, and the whole is engraved with great delicacy and clearness of workmanship, and is shaded with diagonal hatchings. From these circumstances it appears to appertain neither to Botticelli, whose engravings, Vasari tells us, were ill executed; nor to Baldini, who was deficient in drawing: and as, in the arrangement and richness of its composition, as well as in some other particulars, it bears a considerable resemblance to the two *paxes*, which we have described, of Finiguerra, it is not impossible that it may be by his hand. As I have not, however, seen the remainder of the series, I will not insist upon the probability of my conjectures. Further mention will be made of these engravings in a subsequent page.

CHAPTER V.

Impressions from Works of Niello of the ancient Italian Goldsmiths, in the Durazzo Collection, described—Specimens of the same kind in the possession of the Author—Remarks on the gradual Progress of the Art of taking Impressions from engraved Plates in Italy. Bartsch's Opinions, concerning the Establishment of Chalcography, examined.

WE have observed in the preceding chapter, that, although Maso Finiguerra appears to have first discovered the practicability of taking the impressions of his works of *niello*, some years before the middle of the fifteenth century, it was not until about 1460 that the real importance of his discovery was appreciated; or that plates of larger dimensions began to be executed for the express purpose of multiplying the impressions of engravings for publication.

The Italian goldsmiths, contemporaries of Finiguerra, were early in their attempts to imitate him in the practice of taking impressions from his engravings in silver, and it is probable the usage soon became general amongst them. Like Maso, however, they appear, for a long time, to have derived little advantage from the exercise of their newly acquired art, beyond the simple gratification of retaining for themselves a proof or two, taken from their works, before they delivered them, finished with *niello*, into the hands of those who had ordered them; a custom, indeed, which, there is reason to believe, continued to be practised by the goldsmiths, in different

parts of Italy, for many years after the art of Chalcography came into use.

Lanzi observes, that the Italian goldsmiths are also supposed to have occasionally taken impressions from certain of their other engravings on silver, in which *niello* was not used. Of this description were the productions which he styles, *lavori a graffito;* an expression which appears to indicate that they were superficially scratched on the metal with a steel point, in contradistinction to such engravings as were intended to be finished with *niello,* which necessarily required to be executed with greater depth of stroke by means of the burin. The term *graffito,* or *sgraffito,* however, as applied to works on metal, is not found in Vasari; and appears to have been used by Lanzi, and some other Italian writers, in a sense so nearly resembling that in which we use the term *engraving,* that it may be difficult to draw the distinction.

That the burin itself was used in executing engravings upon plate, not intended to be finished afterwards with *niello,* is evident from the words of Vasari, in his chapter on works of *niello;* where, after describing the burin, he says expressly, " With this instrument all " things are done, which are engraved upon plates of metal; " whether to fill the work afterwards with *niello,* or to leave it " empty, according to the will of the artist." In this preceptive part of his work, however, Vasari speaks in the present tense, and, consequently, it may appear to admit of a doubt, whether his words refer to the practice used in the time in which he wrote, or to that of the ancient goldsmiths.

But be this as it may, Vasari is decided in ascribing the origin of chalcography to the practice of working in *niello;* and, in speaking of Maso's practice of taking impressions from his engravings in silver, he mentions those only which were to be finished in that manner. Perhaps in proportion as the art of working in *niello* fell into disuse, these *lavori a graffito* came into fashion.

Works of *niello,* as we have seen, were often studied and very highly finished performances; the smallness of whose dimensions

greatly augmented the difficulty of executing them. Works *a graffito,* it may be supposed, bore a nearer affinity to drawings, or bold sketches; and were even used for the decoration of bowls, cups, salvers, and other utensils of inferior metals. Hence it is probable that the early Italian goldsmiths did not bestow the same pains upon their performances in this way, as they were accustomed to do upon their works of *niello;* that they were often slight and hasty productions, and that, consequently, some time elapsed before they thought of retaining the impressions of works which, in their opinion, could add so little to their professional reputation.

From the above observations we may conclude, that the proofs existing of the early Italian goldsmiths, taken by them from their works of *niello,* or from their other engravings for the decoration of plate, have very unequal pretensions to antiquity; some of them being perhaps of a date as early as 1440; others, of the latter part of the century; and, indeed, it is highly probable that even Marc Antonio, who, in his youth, excelled, as Vasari informs us, in works of *niello,* may have been accustomed to take the impressions of his chief labours in that way; more especially as it is ascertained that his master, Francesco Francia, was no stranger to such a practice. The proofs of the Italian goldsmiths, notwithstanding this probable diversity in their age, may be properly considered, in the aggregate, as the legitimate monuments of chalcography in its infancy; they also attest, by the diversity of their styles, that the new art, in this, its first state, was widely diffused throughout Italy; some of them being taken from the rude essays of obscure artisans of distant provinces; others from the masterly, and, sometimes, highly wrought productions of eminent artists of the best schools. They are likewise distinguished by the different degrees of success with which they were printed: some of them having been taken off with a tint of little consistency, by means, perhaps, of friction, or a common roller; whilst others, especially some of those of a later date, appear to have been printed with a sufficiently well contrived apparatus, and dark oil colour.

The Cabinet of the Count Durazzo, at Genoa, rich, perhaps, beyond every other, in prints of the old Italian artists, possesses, as we have said, many of the proofs taken by the early goldsmiths from their works of *niello*. The following descriptive catalogue of thirty-two of them, as given by Bartsch, will not be uninteresting to the reader.

PROOFS OF THE ITALIAN GOLDSMITHS FROM THEIR WORKS OF NIELLO.

SUBJECTS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. *The Nativity.*

'The Virgin Mary and Joseph are represented adoring the newly born infant, who is lying upon a carpet spread on the ground. In the back-ground, on the left, is the stable; and on the right, the Angel appears announcing the birth of our Saviour to the Shepherds. Three other angels, half of whose figures only are seen, and in front, are in the clouds, holding a scroll, upon which is written: GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO. Upon a second scroll, placed lower in the composition, is inscribed: EVANGELICO VOBIS GAUDIUM MAGNUM. This subject is enclosed in a circle, round which is written: DOMINUS . PHILIPPUS . STANCHARIUS . HOC OPUS . FIERI . PRECEPIT . TERTIO . KALENDAS . JULII. All these inscriptions are reversed.

Diameter, 1 inch 7-8ths, independent of the inscription, which is without the border of the composition.

2. *John baptizing Christ.*

'St. John is standing towards the right, baptizing Christ, who is in the middle of the print, having his hands joined together and elevated. Two persons in religious habits, with their backs turned towards the spectator, are kneeling in the fore-ground; the one on the right, the other on the left. Two angels, in attitudes expressive

of adoration, are standing towards the left, in the back-ground, which represents an extensive mountainous country. God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, surrounded by a glory of angels, appear in the middle of the upper part of the print.

In height, 3 inches and 3-8ths, by 2 inches 6-8ths in breadth.

3. *Jesus Christ on the Cróss.*

' Jesus Christ on the Cross, occupies the middle of the print: on the left hand is the Virgin Mary, and, on the right, St. John. The City of Jerusalem is seen in the distance. The sky, with the exception of a few clouds, is dark.

A circle, bounded by a simple line. Diameter, 1 inch 1-4th.

4. *Jesus Christ on the Cross.*

' The figure of our Saviour on the Cross, occupies the middle of the print. In the air, on either side, are two angels, in attitudes expressive of lamentation. At the foot of the cross, on the right, is the Virgin, standing; and on the same side, in the back-ground, is St. Francis on his knees. St. John is standing on the left; and behind, in the back-ground, on that side, is St. Jerom kneeling. In the distance, is a city situated on the borders of the sea, out of which rise two islands, each surmounted by a large and steep rock. The letters INRI appear reversed. The composition is arched at top.'

In height, 2 inches 7-8ths, by 1 inch 7-8ths in breadth.

The plate from which this proof was taken, is described by Zani, who, however, when he wrote, did not know of the existence of the impression from it in the Durazzo cabinet. The original is no other than a *Pax*, worked in *niello*, by the hand of Francesco Francia, for the church of *S. Giacomo*, at Bologna. It is now preserved in the collection of the Institute of Bologna, together with another *Pax* by the same artist, representing the Resurrection of Christ, who is represented giving the benediction with his right hand, whilst four soldiers are asleep at the four corners of the se-

pulchre. This last was originally executed for the church of the *Misericordia*, in the same city, and measures 3 inches 9-16ths in height, by 2 inches 5-16ths in breadth. Both these engraved plates are surrounded by ornamental frames of chiselled work, one of which is also enriched with enamel, and decorated by a silver basso-relievo. Each bears the arms of the family that caused it to be executed.

5. *The Burial of Christ.*

'Nicodemus is represented supporting the body of Christ by the middle, and laying it in the sepulchre. On each side is an angel: that on the right holds the crown of thorns. The back-ground is of a plain dark tint.

It measures 2 inches 3-8ths in breadth, by 1 inch 3-16ths in breadth.

Devotional Subjects and Saints.

6. *A Pieta.*

'The body of Christ, of which only the upper part is seen, is placed upright in the sepulchre, whereon is inscribed: MORS . MEA . VITA . TUA. The figure of Christ is surrounded by the instruments of his passion, among which are to be seen, on the right, the ladder, the hand of Judas Iscariot holding the thirty pieces of silver, and the cock; and, on the left, the heads of the two thieves. This composition is of a circular form, and is enclosed in two borders, one of which is ornamented with foliage; the other contains this inscription: CORPORIS AFFLICTU . VERBIS . ET . ULNERE QUINO . FRANCISCO . FAVEAS SURGAT . ET . IPSA . DOMUS.

Diameter, 2 inches and one-half.

7. *The Madonna between two Saints.*

'The Virgin is seated on a throne, with the infant Christ in her arms. On the left stands a Saint, whose mitre and crosier denote him to be a Bishop; and, on the right, another Saint of some

religious order, with a book in his left hand. The throne is elevated upon two steps. The form of this piece is oval.

In height, 2 inches; in breadth, 1 inch 7-16ths.

8. *St. John the Evangelist.*

'The Saint is standing, and holds in his right hand a staff, surmounted by a cross and an oval, in which is represented the lamb: he points with his other hand towards a scroll, on which is written, ECCE AGNUS, in characters reversed. Behind him, are two mounds of earth ornamented with trees, and above are some white clouds, relieved upon a dark ground.

Height, 2 inches 5-8ths: breadth, 1 inch 1-4th.

9. *St. George.*

'St. George is on horseback, and completely armed. His horse, at full gallop, is directed towards the left, where the dragon appears, into whose mouth the saint is thrusting his spear. The queen, whom he has delivered, is on her knees in the back-ground, on the same side. This piece is circular, and surrounded by a simple line.

Diameter, 1 inch 1-4th.

SUBJECTS OF PROFANE HISTORY.

10. *Mutius Scevola.*

'Mutius Scevola is represented burning his hand in the fire placed upon an altar opposite to Porsenna, who is seated upon his throne, on the right of the print. On the left are several Roman soldiers, on horseback and on foot. Upon a small cloud over the head of Porsenna, is a crescent, and upon one of the steps of the throne is the letter P.

Breadth, 3 inches 1-8th: height, 2 inches 1-8th.

Mythological Subjects.

11. *Hercules and Dejanira.*

'Hercules and Dejanira are represented standing opposite to each other; the former on the left, the latter on the right; their arms extended as if they were about to embrace. Above the heads of these figures, are two scrolls, on which are inscribed the names, HERCULES, DIEANIRA. The letter P. is engraved in the middle of the margin at bottom.

Height, 1 inch 7-8ths: breadth, 1 inch 1-4th.

12. *Hercules killing the Hydra.*

'Hercules appears standing on the left, and about to give a blow to the Hydra with the club, which he elevates in his right hand; he has seized the monster, which is on the right, by one of its heads.

Height, 2 inches: breadth, 1 inch 1-4th.

13. *A Sea-God, and a Nereid.*

'An old Sea-Deity appears traversing the ocean, directing his course towards the left. He is seated upon a sea-horse, which terminates in a large fish's tail, and has before him a Nereid, who has her right arm round his neck, and, with her left hand, takes hold of one of the ears of the horse. A circular composition surrounded by a border ornamented with pearls.

Diameter, 2 inches 1-8th.

14. *The Judgment of Paris.*

'Paris is seated on the right, with a dog at his feet: he presents the golden apple, with his left hand, to Venus, who is standing before him, on the left, accompanied by the two other Goddesses.

The back-ground represents a mountainous country. The lower edge of this print is determined by three curved lines.

Height, 2 inches, 5-16ths: breadth, 1 inch 11-16ths.

PORTRAITS.

15. *The Portrait of a Man.*

'The head of a Young Man seen in profile, and turned towards the right. He has strait long hair, and around his head, which is covered with a cap, is a scroll, bearing this inscription: LA SPERANZA MI CONFORTA. A circle.

Diameter, 1 inch 1-8th.

16. *Another Portrait of a Man.*

'The upper part of the figure is seen, he is viewed in profile, and turned towards the right. He has long hair, and his head is covered with a cap, which has a border. An ornamental sprig of foliage is in front of him, and another is behind him. Above are two curtains; one drawn up towards the left, the other towards the right.

Height, 1 inch 1-4th: breadth, 7-8ths.

17 *The Portrait of a Lady.*

'A Young Lady, half length, seen almost in front, and turned a little towards the right. Her hair is divided into tresses, two of which fall over her left cheek, two others over her right. A piece of ornamental foliage rises on each side of this portrait. The print is irregularly curved (bombée) at the top.

Height, 1 inch and one half: breadth 1 inch 1-8th.

18. *A Male and a Female Head.*

'On the left of this piece is the bust of a young man, turned towards the right His head is bent forward, and his hands are

crossed upon his bosom. On the right is the bust of a young woman: she is turned towards the left, and holds a flower in her right hand. Near her head is a scroll, on which is inscribed: ECOME. The upper and the lower edge of this print are irregularly curved.

Breadth, 1 inch and a half: height, left side, 6-8ths of an inch; right side, 7-8ths.

19. *A Male and a Female Head.*

'The busts of a man and of a woman, seen in profile, and placed opposite to each other; the woman on the left, the man on the right. Between these heads is a vase of flowers. The back-ground presents a landscape with some trees. The left edge of this plate is curved inwards.

Breadth, 2 inches 1-8th: height, 1 inch.

20. *Two Busts of Men.*

'Two busts of men regarding each other, and placed in niches. That on the left has a cuirass and a helmet, ornamented with three masks. The other has a drapery and a helmet, which is surmounted by a winged figure, holding a cornucopia.

Breadth, 2 inches 1-8th: height, 1 inch and a half.

FANCY SUBJECTS.

21. *A Young Female, walking Blindfolded.*

'A young woman, elegantly dressed, with her eyes covered by a bandage, walking, with an uncertain step, towards the right, and extending her hands, as if to feel her way. In the back-ground, towards the right, is a dog, looking at her. On a scroll, above, is written, in characters reversed, VA IN LA CANEVA. A circle.

Diameter, 1 inch 1-4th.

22. *The Wheel.*

'On the right, at the upper part of this print, is seen a hand, which projects out of the clouds, and by means of a cord, appears to give motion to a wheel: a fool and two asses are fixed to this wheel, and are accompanied by labels. That to the right is inscribed REGNATEM; that on the left, REGNABO; and on that at top is written REGNA. These words are in characters reversed. A circle.

Diameter, 1 inch 1-4th.

23. *A King, seated.*

'The monarch is seen in profile, and is turned towards the right. His head is ornamented with a crown, and his hands are both in action.

Height, 1 inch 3-8ths: breadth, 1 inch.

24. *A Roman General haranguing his Soldiers.*

'The general, accompanied by another warrior, is standing on the right, upon a raised pavement. He appears to be haranguing three soldiers, one of whom carries a torch: the two others bear trophies, which are fixed to the ends of their lances. An oval.

Height, 1 inch 3-8ths: breadth, 1 inch 1-8th.

25. *A man tied to the Trunk of a Tree.*

'A naked man, standing, and bound to the stem of a tree; his hands tied behind his back. His body is turned a little towards the right, and his head is elevated towards the left. Upon a scroll near his head is inscribed, in characters reversed, NON PIU (FO)RTUNA. The two letters FO are wanting.

Height, 2 inches: breadth, 7-8ths of an inch.

26. *A Lion destroying a Man.*

'The lion is seen in profile, and turned towards the right: he has his paws upon the man, and is about to tear him in pieces.

Breadth, 2 inches: height, 1 inch, 1-16th.

27. *A Female binding a Man to a Tree.*

'The woman is naked, and standing on a bank, from which rises the stem of a tree. A young man, also naked, is seated at the foot of the tree, to which the woman is binding him with a cord. Near the top, towards the right, is a scroll, on which, in characters reversed, are these words: VA MORI.

Height, 2 inches 1-8th: breadth, 1 inch.

28. *A Young Woman, standing.*

'She is seen in profile, and turned towards the right: her hands are crossed before her. Above her head is a scroll, with these words, in characters reversed: SOL IN DIO SPERO. This piece is curved at top.

Height, 2 inches 3-8ths: breadth, 5-8ths of an inch.

ORNAMENTS, &c.

29. *A Coat of Arms.*

'The shield is barred in six divisions, and is surmounted by a helmet with its mantles. The helmet is crested by a crown, and a leopard couching, over which is a scroll with these words, in characters reversed: VIRTU . VIVE . E . NON . TEME. Near the top, towards the right, is the letter M, which is relieved by light, upon a dark ground. A circle.

Diameter, 2 inches.

30. *Grotesque Ornaments.*

'This print contains arabesques mingled with figures; amongst which is a male figure with wings, who is sitting with his legs asunder upon the tails of two dolphins, and holds a torch in each hand. Upon the back of each of the dolphins is a winged triton sounding a horn. Above is a cartouch, surmounted by three large birds,

and ornamented in the middle by a small circle, in which is the letter P.*

Height, 2 inches 3-4ths: breadth, 1 inch 11-16ths.

31. *A Vignette.*

'In the middle of this vignette is an oval which is left white, and is ornamented on each side by the figure of a horse, terminating in twisted foliage.

Breadth, 4 inches: height, half an inch.

32. *A Design for the Top of a Box.*

'This design, which appears to have been engraved for the top of a box, represents, in the middle, an oval, which is left white, and is ornamented with heads of cherubims, placed at the four corners, in the vacancies left by the oval in the oblong space in which it is introduced. At the top of the print is a sort of frieze, in which are four half figures, each placed in a niche. The first of these figures, beginning at the right hand, represents the Virgin; the second, the Angel, who is announcing to her the mystery of the incarnation; the third is a Saint holding a cross; and the fourth is a Saint of the Franciscan order, with a book. In another frieze, at the bottom of the print, are four half-length female figures, representing Justice, Fortitude, Temperance, and Prudence, each with a crown on her head.†

Height, 4 inches: breadth, 2 inches 3-4ths.'

* This letter P is found, also, on Nos. 10 and 11, before described; and is, probably, the initial of the artist.

† We learn from *Lanzi*, tom. i. p. 84, that, when he wrote, the *Abate Boni*, Secretary to the Marquis Durazzo, was employed in preparing an account of the ancient prints of that nobleman's magnificent collection. It appears from *Bartsch*, "Peintre Graveur," vol. xiii. p. 24, that Boni has since published at least a part of this work, accompanied by fac-similes of the thirty-two proofs from works of *niello* above described. I have in vain inquired for this publication of *Boni*, in London and at Paris, for several months past; and have, with great regret, been obliged to go to press with the present Chapter without seeing it. Perhaps I may, hereafter, be enabled to obtain it: in which case, any observations that it may give rise to, shall be given in an appendix.

The following specimens in my own collection, are, doubtless, the proofs of old Italian goldsmiths, from their works of *niello*, or other engravings for the decoration of plate.

No. 1. A Cupid riding on a Dolphin; a pretty group, of which a copy is here subjoined, very accurately engraved from the original.

2. Its companion.—A figure of Cupid, with his eyes bandaged, his arms tied behind him, and his wings extended, seated on a rock in the midst of the sea.

These two specimens are, most probably, of the Florentine school, and I should judge them to be of a date not later than 1460. They are printed apparently by a roller, with a greyish tint, and the impression of No. 2, is very defective. I am not without my suspicions that they, as well as the four following specimens, may be impressions taken by Baldini from some of his works of *niello*.

3. An upright plate, 4 inches and 7-8ths in height, by 7-8ths of an inch in breadth, ornamented with arabesques. A tripod supporting a vase, out of which springs an ornament of foliage that

rises to the top of the print. The foliage, at the distance of one inch and a quarter from the vase, passes through a small crown, by which it is confined.

4. The companion to the last described—same dimensions. The foliage, in this print, rises from a sort of candelabrum, of about an inch and a half in height, composed of three parts: viz. its base, which is seen upon an angle; its body, which is something like a common tea-urn; and the vase at top.

5. An ornament of foliage; lengthways 4 inches and 1-8th, by 1 inch and 1-8th. The center presents four large leaves, with, in the midst of them, something like a small pine-apple. The ramifications of the foliage pass through four rings, two of which are introduced at either end of the plate.

6. Of its companion, in which a naked figure of a boy is prettily introduced among the foliage, the reader will be enabled to judge from the following copy.

These four specimens, which, as has been said, I am inclined to think are by the same hand as the two circles before described, are, probably, the proofs taken from works of *niello,* intended to be inserted among the decorations of small cabinets of ivory or ebony, such as Lanzi speaks of, and as have been mentioned in the beginning of this Chapter. Nos. 5 and 6, appear to have been

printed with a common roller, moved backwards and forwards by the hand.

7. A circle, 1 inch 5-8ths in diameter. Sampson tearing open the Jaws of the Lion. The figure of Sampson is seen nearly in front, and his head is turned towards the left: he presses the back of the lion with his left knee, while, with his hands extended towards the right, he tears open the jaws of the ferocious animal: he has a shield thrown over his shoulder, and is naked. Behind him, on the left, is a tree, and in the distance, on the same side, is a rocky hillock; a mount of greater eminence forms the back-ground on the right. The impression of this print is very dark, but of a soft and confused effect; and was probably taken off by friction. It is in a very different style from any of the preceding, and is, I am inclined to think, of the old Bolognese school. It is, probably, the proof of a work of *niello* by Francesco Francia.

From such essays, as Lanzi observes, the transition was made, in some parts more early, and in others later, to what may be termed the *second state* of the art of engraving. The beautiful effects of these proofs from works of *niello*, at length suggested the idea of engraving works in that finished and delicate taste, and of applying them to the purposes for which, hitherto, wood-prints only had been used. Thus was the cradle of chalcography prepared in the work-shops of the silversmiths, whose first engravings with a view to impression, were executed, it is supposed, on silver or pewter, or on some metallic compound less hard than copper. Plates of larger dimensions than those required for works of *niello*, soon began to be used, and artists of superior abilities entered the lists. The intended subject, together with any inscription attached to it, was now engraved in a reverse direction on the plate, that it might come the right way in the impression; and as, from the increased size of the engravings, the difficulty of printing them with an imperfect apparatus was

greatly augmented, the plate was sometimes fixed, by small nails at its corners, to a table or other flat piece of wood; that thus it might be kept steady during the operation, and the pressure, whether of a roller, or of any other kind, be applied the more effectually. Of this custom of the early Italian engravers, of fastening their plates, during the operation of impression, by means of small nails or pegs of metal, we shall find numerous examples among the prints of the early masters which will hereafter be described; and, indeed, the traces of such a practice, are to be found even as late as the commencement of the sixteenth century.

The observations already made upon the *proofs* taken by the Italian goldsmiths from their engravings on plate, will in many respects apply to the first essays of the art, in this, the *second* stage of its progress. They are often unequally and feebly printed, with a tint of little consistency, most frequently inclining to grey, sometimes to brown, and have a soft effect. Many of them seem to attest, by their confused and dazzling appearance, that they were printed with a roller, moved backwards and forwards by the hand: others, of a brown tint, sometimes bear so near a resemblance to designs executed with a pen and bistre, that I have seen experienced judges hesitate before they would pronounce whether they were really prints or drawings.*

By degrees the art of printing engravings became better understood throughout Italy; plates of copper began to be used instead of those of softer metals; and, at length, Mantegna, and some others, appear to have become possessed of a press of adequate power, and printing ink of sufficient depth and consistency, to give to the impressions of engravings their fullest effect. The chalcographic art, so far as relates to impression, had then attained what Lanzi terms its *third*, or mature state.

* I possess, indeed, in my own collection, an early impression of one of Mantegna's engravings—one of the compartments of his triumph—which the best connoisseur might, without discredit, mistake for a drawing.

This gradual progress of chalcography in Italy, from infancy to adolescence and maturity, is strongly insisted upon by Lanzi, as affording the most substantial proof of its being really the invention of that nation: "whereas," says he, "all the ancient prints, which "have been hitherto produced in Germany, seem, as it were," (with respect to their mechanism,) "perfect in their kind; for neither "proofs of works of *niello*, nor other first attempts at engraving in "metals of a soft temperature, are ever mentioned in that country. "It is therefore most probable that, according to ancient belief, "and the testimony of Vasari, the invention found its way from "Italy into Germany; and that, as an art easy to the goldsmith, it "was immediately practised with success; nay, I will add, im-"proved by the artists of Germany. For as they were there "acquainted with the press, and with the ink proper for printing, "they were enabled to supply to the mechanical parts of the art, "those things of which Italy was still ignorant."

"I will illustrate what I have said," adds Lanzi, "by an ex-"ample exactly in point. The art of printing books, was discovered "in Germany: history records it, and various monuments confirm "it, which shew the gradual progress of the invention, from the use "of wooden blocks to that of separate characters, likewise of wood; "and from those, to types of metal. In this state the invention was "brought amongst us; and presently Italy, without passing through "these intermediate degrees of imperfection, printed books, not "only with moveable characters of metal, but likewise ornamented "with engraved plates; thus adding to the art a perfection which "was before wanting to it."

"The Baron Heineken (Idée Genérale, pp. 139, 140.) opposes to "my argument, that the Germans, in those times, had but little cor-"respondence with the cities of Italy, with the exception of Venice. "I answer, that our universities of Bologna and Pisa, and not a few "others, were very much frequented by the young men of Germany "at that period; and that for the use of foreigners, as well as that of "the citizens, there were printed at Venice, in 1475, and at Bologna,

" in 1479, dictionaries of the German language; a circumstance " certainly in itself sufficient to prove a communication not unfre- " quent between two nations. There might be produced moreover " so many other facts, arguing the communication which took place " between Germany and Italy in those early times, as to make it " no matter of wonder that the arts of one country found their way " into the other."

Such were amongst the cogent arguments used by this excellent writer, in answer to a host of opponents, at a time when, in the opinion of many impartial persons, the pretensions of Italy were not sustained by evidence of that unquestionable character which their ultimate establishment appeared to require.

" I also," says he, " have argued the cause of my country to the " best of my abilities, although I am far from flattering myself that I " have put an end to the controversy. Perhaps some time or other, " those proofs of *niello* and first essays of the art, which no one has " hitherto produced, may be discovered likewise in Germany. Per- " haps one of the writers of that nation, who are at present so " numerous and so learned, may strengthen the hypothesis of Hei- " neken, that the Germans and the Italians, without any know- " ledge of each others' successes, discovered the new art. What- " ever may be to come, I argue upon such documents as " already exist."

Lanzi, I believe, lived long enough, after writing the above, to be informed of the important discovery of Finiguerra's print at Paris; and probably died with the gratifying conviction, that at length the claims of Italy were indeed established upon the solid basis of positive proof—that the controversy was at an end.

The claims of Italy are indeed established, but the controversy is not at an end. The advocate of Germany now posts himself on other ground; like Proteus, he assumes a new form, and again invites the combat.

A living German writer, already mentioned, Mr. Bartsch, whose book is too much read, and whose arguments are too plausible to be

passed over in silence, has lately treated the subject in "An Essay "on the History of the Discovery of the Art of taking Impressions "from Engravings," prefixed to the thirteenth volume of his extensive work, "Le Peintre Graveur,"—a volume which contains the catalogues of the Italian engravers who preceded Marc Antonio. Of this essay he seems, in his *avant propos*, to be not a little proud; and to say the truth, it is written with considerable ingenuity.

In the review which I have taken of Finiguerra's invention of the art of taking impressions from engravings, of the early promulgation of that art in its infant state amongst the Italian goldsmiths, and of its gradual advancement to maturity, I have been obliged to differ most materially from the opinions urged by Mr. Bartsch in the above essay; and as I feel it a duty, as far as possible, to clear this part of the subject from the obscurities with which it seems still enveloped, before I proceed further, I shall now devote a few pages to an examination of that writer's argument.

The positive existence of an undoubted print by Finiguerra, of a date at least anterior by thirteen or fourteen years to any impression taken from an engraving on metal, which Germany has been able to produce, could not, after the publication of Zani's book, be any longer denied; and Bartsch is reluctantly constrained, even in the very heart of Germany, to acknowledge Maso's claim to the honour of having discovered an *imperfect* method of procuring impressions from his works on silver: imperfect indeed—for, artfully clinging to the erroneous reading of Baldinucci, he insists that those impressions were taken from the sulphur casts, not from the engraved plates themselves.

Having admitted so much, he thinks that Italy ought to be well satisfied with his candour and liberality. Desirous to make amends to his German readers for so great a concession, he turns the early prints of Italy into ridicule; takes prodigious pains to shew that the artists of that country were unable to turn their own invention to any account; and insists that all the credit of perfecting it, belonged to the brighter wits of Germany.

" Finiguerra," says Bartsch, " it is true, had made his discovery, " but appears to have been wholly insensible to the important " results which he might have drawn from it; and, of consequence, " to have felt no desire to go one step further towards perfecting it. " It is almost certain that he stopped there, and that he contented " himself, when he had obtained his sulphur cast, and taken from " it, at the most, a couple of impressions. For this reason, there- " fore, we repeat, the first print is to be considered rather as the " production of chance, than as the result of an invention preceded " by researches and combinations. But what is really astonishing " is, that the discovery, although communicated to several other " goldsmiths, should have remained in the same state of imperfec- " tion during many years; that is, until about 1460. All the prints " that Italy can furnish, printed during this space of time, are con- " fined, in all appearance, to a few proofs of works of *niello*, the " grey tint and imperfect impression of which, seem to attest, that " they likewise were taken from sulphurs, and, of consequence, in " a very small number."

" That which proves the obscurity in which the new discovery " remained enveloped, during so long a time, is the absolute silence " of all contemporary writers, as well as the entire want of other " notices respecting it, which certainly could not have failed to " reach us, had they been dispersed at all generally."

I have already given my reasons for differing entirely from Mr. Bartsch, as to the mode in which Finiguerra obtained impressions of his works of *niello* on paper, which I have endeavoured to shew were taken from the plate itself, not from the sulphur; and I am ignorant of the testimony upon which he founds the opinion, that that master never carried the art further: but when, against the evidence of common sense, he would persuade us that all the other Italian goldsmiths, who took impressions of their engravings during so long an interval, used the same method; that is, that they resorted, not to the plate itself, so well fitted for impression, but to a sulphur cast taken from it, which he has before acknow-

ledged to be so ill adapted to that purpose, he certainly accuses the Italians of a degree of stupidity which has not hitherto been considered characteristic of that people, and gives his readers credit for a greater share of complacency than I at least possess. Besides, it is to be remembered, that if the Italians began to take impressions directly from their engraved plates no earlier than 1460, (and Mr. Bartsch appears to admit that data in the above passage) they may, even then, boast of having practised the art five years before it is known to have been practised in Germany; since that country produces no authentic date upon any impression of an engraving on metal, earlier than the years 1465 and 1466.

With regard to the greyish tint of the proofs of the old Italian goldsmiths, it proves no more than that they were taken off with a colour of little consistency; and as to the imperfect manner in which so many of them are printed, it is sufficiently accounted for by the natural supposition, that some were taken off before the discovery of a proper printing press; others, of a later date, printed by goldsmiths, who, though not ignorant of the existence of such an apparatus, were, nevertheless, unprovided with it, and were, consequently, obliged, in taking off such impressions, to have recourse to the friction of some smooth body, or the insufficient pressure of a common roller. I, myself, once tried the effect of taking two or three impressions from a deeply etched copper-plate, by means of a common roller, pressed over damped paper with all the force I could use: the etching being first filled with oil paint of a brown colour. Each of the impressions, so taken, differed from the rest; being more or less defective in some parts, according to the inequality of pressure with which the roller passed over the plate in each operation. All of them strongly resembled designs done with a pen; and an engraver of considerable ability, being shewn one of them on the same evening, was for some time deceived into the belief that it was really an original drawing. But however imperfect these impressions were, from the want of sufficient pressure, I am well satisfied that a sul-

phur cast could not have resisted half the force used in producing them. As to the argument drawn by our author from the silence of contemporary Italian writers respecting the promulgation of Maso's new discovery, it will be best answered by requesting him to inform us of the names of those German writers who, from 1465 to 1480, have recorded the labours of their contemporaries and countrymen, the engraver who marked E·S. Martin Schongauver, Israel Van Meck, and others.

Mr. Bartsch strongly urges the paucity of these proofs of the Italian goldsmiths from their works of *niello.*

" To hear Lanzi, indeed," says he, " one would suppose that " the number of these proofs of *niello* was very considerable, that " one could perceive in them the difference of schools, and that " they were dispersed throughout every province of Italy. But on " careful examination of what is said by that eloquent author, one " discovers, that his arguments, however ingenious, are not sustained " by solid and satisfactory proof. Where, we ask him, is this great " number of impressions of works of *niello?* He himself only speaks " of those preserved in the Durazzo cabinet, at Genoa. We are " not acquainted with those pieces, but we have every reason to " believe that their number does not much exceed that of the " thirty-two which have been since given to the public in the " copies, which we shall hereafter describe.* We inquire of him, " which are the collections, not only in Italy, but in all Europe, " where prints of this sort are to be found? We ourselves have " seen several of these great collections, and we are acquainted " with the most celebrated, as well by catalogues, as through other " channels of information; but we have found them all, either " entirely destitute of, or very scantily provided with, prints of this " kind. The rich, the immense imperial collection of prints at " Vienna, never possessed one single piece."

To these assertions of Mr. Bartsch, and to his questions (for the

* Bartsch's descriptions of these interesting specimens have been already given.

respected Lanzi is no longer amongst us to answer for himself) I reply: first, that I consider it very possible that some of these proofs may have eluded his search—if, indeed, he ever searched for them, except with the hopes of not finding them—amongst ancient anonymous prints. It is next to impossible that the immense Imperial Collection at Vienna should not contain a single example of that description; unless we may suppose it to have been, at all times, a part of the office of keeper of that collection, to turn out or destroy, as noxious intruders, dangerous to the pretensions of Germany to priority in chalcography, whatever specimen of the kind was from time to time discovered. Secondly, I answer, that I apprehend the fact is not as he has stated it. These proofs of the Italian goldsmiths from their works of *niello,* or other engravings in silver, are not so very uncommon as he would lead us to suppose. Of what description, I would ask in my turn, are the twenty-four pieces in the collection of Mr. Otto, at Leipzig, which Heineken and Huber ascribed to Finiguerra, and which Bartsch has inserted in an appendix to his catalogue of anonymous prints by Italian engravers of the fifteenth century?* Does it not appear probable, from their descriptions, that some of them, at least, are proofs taken by an Italian goldsmith, from his works of *niello,* or other engravings for the decoration of plate? Do not Heineken and Huber, in their accounts of these prints, observe of some of them, that they appear to be the impressions of engravings executed ON the lids of small boxes? Besides, some collections that Mr. Bartsch is acquainted with, appear to be "scantily provided with the impressions of works "of *niello*"—Why omit them in his catalogues?

But the extreme rarity of these proofs of works of *niello,* if admitted, is not so strong an argument, as Bartsch would insinuate, against the prevalence of the custom amongst the Italian goldsmiths in those early times. It is reasonable to suppose that they seldom took more than two or three impressions from any one engraving,

* These pieces will be described in our next chapter.

previous to filling it with *niello*, when it became no longer capable of being printed. Many of these proofs have been, doubtless, destroyed; others lost; a catastrophe to which, from the minute dimensions of most of them, they are especially subject; others still remain, unheeded, amongst old collections of drawings; and others, better printed than the rest, for there can be no doubt of the goldsmiths having, by degrees, improved the process by which they obtained these impressions, escape, undistinguished, in volumes or portfolios of old engravings. For where the impression of a work of *niello* happens to have been well taken off, and there is no inscription upon it, which, by presenting its characters reversed, may serve to ascertain it, it may not be so easily known. I have already described half a dozen small prints in my own small collection, which, I am fully convinced, are of the number of these proofs of the Italian goldsmiths: some of them are printed with tolerable effect; others, less perfectly; but, as they are destitute of inscriptions, I would not undertake to convince Mr. Bartsch that they are, really, what I consider them.

Ought not the confessed rarity of the prints, even of the early German school, to have deterred Mr. Bartsch from having recourse to such an argument? The plates of all these appear to have been engraved for the express purpose of publication, and, consequently, may be supposed to have furnished many impressions: for Germany produces no document, from which it may be conjectured that its goldsmiths of the fifteenth century practised working in *niello*, or that, previous to the discovery of a well constructed press, they made any attempts to procure impressions from their engravings on metal. And yet that writer informs us, in the preface to his Catalogues of the German engravers, from 1466 to the latter part of the sixteenth century, "that so great was the rarity of the "prints described in those Catalogues, that he had only chanced 'to see one single impression of about half of them;" although he had had recourse to all the great collections at Vienna.

Having demonstrated, as he conceives, that few, if any, of these

proofs of the early Italian goldsmiths exist, excepting those in the Durazzo Cabinet, Bartsch next proceeds, with great ingenuity, to shew that the idea of their having ever been general throughout Italy, has little or no foundation, and that, after all, the whole of those existing may be the work of one artist.

" With regard to the authors of these prints," (says he) " it is " very difficult to determine their number, or to prove that they " resided in different cities of Italy. The inequality of execution " observed in them, is, perhaps, only a deceitful variety; and " it is very possible that the pieces attributed to ten* different " masters are the work of but two, nay, perhaps, even of but one " artist."

" The inscriptions upon a few of them, indicating, in one instance, " the city of Bologna, in two others, the dialect of Lombardy, are " not such certain attestations of their origin, as Lanzi seems to sup- " pose; since the former, inscribed with the name of a family, and " the two latter, containing devices, may have been, in fact, executed " by one and the same goldsmith, resident at Florence, in exact " and literal conformity to the desire of three amateurs; one of " whom lived at Bologna, the others, in some town of Lombardy."

Would it be believed that Bartsch, whilst he thus wrote, knew that one of the proofs of which he speaks, was taken from an undoubted work of Francesco Francia of Bologna?†

It is hardly necessary to urge the want of candour, evinced in this argument, and the monstrous improbability of its writer's hypothesis. He is obliged to abandon it, and proceeds:

" But even allowing that there may have been several gold- " smiths, who left impressions of their works of *niello*, and who " resided, either in the same city, or in various cities of Italy, it is " most certain, that in their exercise of the newly discovered art,

* In the absence of the Abate Boni's work, I am led to conjecture, from the above passage, that that writer was of opinion, that the proofs of works of niello, in the Durazzo Cabinet, were the work of ten different goldsmiths.

† Viz. the *niello* of the Crucifixion, described No. 4, p. 324, of this chapter.

" they did not advance one step beyond Maso their prototype."—That is, Maso, it is *almost certain,* never got beyond his impressions taken from sulphurs, and the other goldsmiths of Italy, *most certainly,* never advanced one single step towards the further improvement of the new art, till about 1460.

Where Mr. Bartsch got this intelligence, he has omitted to inform us. I answer, that the reverse is almost certain.

" It is, moreover, remarkable," continues he, " that Vasari " places the discovery of Finiguerra about the year 1460; that " is, several years later than it really took place; and that he " says that Finiguerra was followed by Baldini; who, nevertheless, " does not make his appearance as an engraver, with any degree of " certainty, until 1477, in the two prints," Bartsch ought to have said three, " which he engraved for the work printed at Florence, " under the title of IL MONTE SANTO DI DIO."

" Vasari, indeed, it is well known, is not always implicitly to " be depended on; nevertheless, his absolute silence as to the " existence of engravings printed from the time of Finiguerra's dis- " covery until Baldini, proves sufficiently that he had never seen " any. This, his silence, confirms our opinion; namely, that " Finiguerra was blind to the importance of his discovery; that " the goldsmiths his contemporaries had not the wit to make any " thing of it; that the one and the others satisfied themselves with " casting their sulphurs, and taking from them as many impres- " sions as their fragile nature would permit; that is to say, a num- " ber, at best, very inconsiderable."

" Such was the languishing state of the art in Italy, when a " native of Germany published prints, which, the moment they " are looked at, leave not the smallest room to doubt that they " were engraved on plates of copper, and printed with a press. " We speak of the excellent artist whose name is unknown, but " who used the initials E·S· and whom we term the engraver of " the year 1466."

Here Mr. Bartsch comes to the point. Italy, he says, had made

no step whatever, towards perfecting the new art, when a German artist surprised the world by the production of fine prints!! Let me now be permitted to make a few observations upon this specious tissue of garbled evidence, false premises, and unwarranted conclusions; fabricated, with more ingenuity than fairness, for the purpose of depriving Italy of the honours due to her as inventress of chalcography, and transferring them to Germany.

Where, I would ask, did Mr. Bartsch learn that Baldini did not make his appearance as an engraver, with any degree of certainty, until 1477, in the prints of the *Monte Santo di Dio?* Where is his authority for ascribing those prints to Baldini at all? They indeed may be by that artist, and probably are so: but neither Vasari nor any other old writer says one word of the matter. Is Baldini mentioned in the preface or in the colophon of that curious book, as the author of the engravings which it contains? No—on the contrary, no mention whatever is made of those embellishments, a circumstance which, of itself, seems sufficient to prove that prints were, at that time, no new things at Florence. For had they been the first public essays of the chalcographic art in that city, there can be little doubt that Nicolo della Magna, the publisher, would have made a merit of the introduction of such novel decorations; dwelling on the utility and importance of the new art, as did the publisher of the geography of Ptolemy, printed at Bologna, and bearing date 1462; a date which probably requires amendment, and, it is thought, ought to have been 1472.

How came Mr. Bartsch, upon this occasion, to forget to mention the very curious Florentine almanack described by Strutt, and accompanied by seven small folio prints, representing the seven planets, with their attributes; a work which he himself admits must have been engraved as early as 1464;—that is, two years prior to the earliest date he had been able to discover on any German engraving on metal—and whose magnitude certainly opposes the idea of its having been a first essay of the art, or of the artist, whoever he was? The artist, indeed, Mr Bartsch, seems

afterwards to think, was Baldini; for he describes the series, in the supplement to his list of the prints attributed by him to that engraver. Why did he withhold this information on the present occasion? The answer is obvious;—he well knew that, had he introduced it, his favourite hypothesis must instantly have fallen to the ground. The fabric he had raised with so much care, was built on another's freehold. Still the sojourn was so much to his taste, that he could not resolve to quit it. His title was bad, but he flattered himself that it would escape investigation; that the plausible arguments he had used in its support would have their intended effect, and that he would be left in undisturbed possession. Before the impartial tribunal of truth, he is soon discomfited; his eloquence is of little avail, and the right owner is once more re-established in his invaded property.

So much for Bartsch's argument. Had that author been satisfied to urge, on the behalf of Germany, that that nation was, next to Italy, the first to practise engraving on copper; and that its professors greatly contributed to the advancement and perfection of the new art; no reasonable person could have denied assent to his proposition: but when, at the close of his discourse, he recommends that Italy and Germany should shake hands, and equally divide between them the honour of the invention, we are reminded of the man, who, when he found he must lose his lawsuit, modestly offered to be satisfied with one half of the estate which had been the subject of litigation.

CHAPTER VI.

The Works of Ancient Engravers of the Florentine School, described. Baccio Baldini—Sandro Botticelli—Antonio del Pollajuolo. Ancient Prints of this School by unknown Artists. Other early Florentine Engravers. Gherardo. Robetta.

IN the brief sketch given in the preceding chapter, of the progress of the art of taking impressions from engraved plates of metal, from its invention by Finiguerra, to the final establishment of chalcography, we have distinguished that art, after the example of Lanzi, into *three* states of advancement: we have there, also, spoken of the proofs taken by the goldsmiths from their works of *niello*, or other engravings for the decoration of plate; because, in the arrangement of a collection of ancient prints, these seem to merit the first consideration; as constituting a distinct class, illustrative of the art we treat of in its *first* or infant state.

The impressions of other ancient engravings, executed on softer or coarser metals than copper, or printed by an imperfect process, may, in like manner, as Lanzi observes, be considered as the monuments of the new art during its second stage of advancement; and, consequently, may naturally appear to merit the being placed in a *second* corresponding class. Many difficulties, however, oppose themselves to such an arrangement, in a work like the present; and the following objections to it may suffice to justify the method intended to be pursued in the ensuing

pages: viz. that we find impressions of the same plate, some of them, apparently taken off with an imperfect apparatus, and a tint of little consistency, (and these are, probably, the earliest,) and others, printed with a powerful press and dark glutinous oil colour. So that were we to attempt the above classification, the print which, from the imperfectness of the impression we had chanced to see, we had classed amongst the examples of the art in its second stage of advancement, might be found, in another collection, printed with all the strength and power of the finest print of Marc Antonio; the finest impressions of whose engravings have, as is well known, a richness and depth of colour not to be surpassed. Moreover, in such a classification, it would be necessary, in many instances, to separate the works of the same engraver; as in the case of Mantegna, who, having practised the art of engraving whilst in its second or imperfect state, lived long enough afterwards to contribute, by his example, to its final perfection and establishment.

In the descriptions, therefore, of ancient prints, which we now proceed to lay before the reader, we shall class the engravings of each school, as nearly as possible, in chronological order; without, however, separating the known works of any one master from each other; and in the few instances in which the writings of Vasari, or any other writer of authority, furnish materials, we shall give some account of the artists themselves, as well as of their performances. Of the inventor, Finiguerra, we have spoken fully in a former chapter: Baldini next appears to claim our notice.

BACCIO BALDINI.

All the information we possess concerning this ancient engraver, is contained in a short passage of Vasari; wherein that writer, after having recorded the story of Finiguerra's discovery, relates that "he was followed by Baccio Baldini, a Florentine goldsmith,

" who not being a very skilful designer, engraved all that he did " from the inventions and designs of Sandro Botticelli."*

This account, scanty as it is, cannot safely be taken in a rigidly literal sense. It is not credible that Botticelli, who was an artist of eminence, constantly occupied in large works of painting, should have found time, on all occasions, to make designs for Baldini to engrave from; and, indeed, he was sometimes employed, for a length of time together, at a distance from Florence; as in the years 1473-4, when he superintended and assisted in the execution of the fresco paintings, made by the order of Sixtus IV., in the chapel newly erected by him in the palace of the Vatican, at Rome. Nor can the expression, that Baldini was not a skilful designer, justify our supposition that he was extremely defective in a part of the art in which, at all times, it was especially the pride of the artists of the Florentine school to excel. Perhaps Vasari meant to say no more than that Baldini, in comparison of many other artists of Florence of the same period, was inferior in design and invention; and that, consequently, for many of his principal works of engraving, he availed himself of the designs of Botticelli and other masters.

We have before had occasion to observe, that Vasari, in the short account of the infancy of chalcography prefixed to his lives of Marc Antonio and others, betrays evident impatience to proceed. Finiguerra, Baldini, and Mantegna, are indeed the only three ancient engravers of the Italian school that he there mentions; although, in other parts of his work, he speaks of the engravings of Pollajuolo and Botticelli. It seems, therefore, reasonable to conclude, from his notice of Baldini in this place, that that artist held an eminent rank amongst the *professional* engravers of Florence of his time; and, especially, that his works

* " Fu seguitato costui da Baccio Baldini, " Orefice Fiorentino, il quale non havendo " molto disegno, tutto quello, che fece, fu " con inventione, e disegno di Sandro Bot- " ticelli."

were numerous, and well known. Now we possess many engravings, which, at the same time that they bear every characteristic mark of the Florentine school of this early period, appear also, from the peculiarities of their style and execution, to be the productions of one artist: and perhaps the above consideration may be deemed sufficient to justify the conjecture, that those pieces are really by Baldini.

We commence the catalogue of Baldini's supposed works, with a description of twenty-four prints, which were formerly in the cabinet of the celebrated Baron de Stosch, who became possessed of them during a long residence at Florence. They were purchased, after the death of Stosch, by M. Otto, of Leipzig, and were ascribed, by Heineken* and Huber,† to Maso Finiguerra. Bartsch, who saw a duplicate impression of one of them, (No. 4,) assures us, that they are by the same engraver who executed the set of fifty prints, known in Italy under the title of Il Giuoco di Tarocchi;‡ an assurance to which we are inclined to give the more credit, as Heineken has given us the fac-similes of two others, (of which copies will be presently presented to the reader,) which, upon examination, appear to justify the remark. We are aware that the circumstance of one or two of the titles, under the figures of the Giuoco di Tarocchi, being written in the Venetian dialect, may appear to constitute a reasonable ground for the opinion stated by Lanzi,§ and afterwards by Zani,‖ that those engravings are of the Venetian or Paduan school; but a very careful comparison of many of them with various ancient engravings of the Florentine school, and, amongst the rest, with the three prints published in 1477, at Florence, in the Monte Santo di Dio, has as-

* Neue Nachrichten, p. 281, et seq.

† "Manuel des Amateurs de l'Art," tom. iii. p. 29, et seq.

‡ "Peintre Graveur," tom. xiii. p. 142.

§ "Storia Pittorica," tom. i. p. 82. Lanzi, indeed, says that these prints are ascribed, by good judges, to Mantegna. In answer to this, I can only say that I find not in them the smallest resemblance to his style.

‖ "Materiali," &c. p. 70.

sured us, that they are really Florentine; and, indeed, that they are by the hand of the same individual engraver.

Huber observes, that, after an examination of the twenty-four pieces in question, he is obliged to confess, that although the engravings of the German artists, of the same period, are superior to those of the Italians, in the management of the burin; the latter have infinitely the advantage, in the grace and contour of the figures, and the taste with which they are composed.

No. 1. " A female, almost naked, lying upon the ground; perhaps intended for Venus; above, is a scroll with these words: " AMOR VUOL FE E DOVE FE NONN E, AMOR NON PUO. This subject " appears to have been engraved *on* the top of an oval box. The " same inscription is to be found on No. 17."

A careful imitation of the copy given by Heineken of this piece, will enable the reader to form some judgment of its style; which a good deal resembles that of the Cupid riding on the Dolphin, introduced at page 333.

2. " A young man and a young woman, who serve as supporters " to a circular shield, upon which the arms of the Medici family are

" sketched with a pen : two short inscriptions at top, as the reader " will perceive from the following copy, are added in the same " manner. At the bottom of the shield, is a vase of flowers ; and, " upon it, is a basket filled with apples ; of which fruit each of the " figures holds one in the air. The female is dressed in the Greek " costume, and has two girdles. This subject appears to have been " engraved *on* the lid of a round box.

" Diameter, 4 inches 3-4ths.

3. " A circular print, with a large border, composed of eight " bunches of fruit, tied together; in the middle is a half-length " figure of a corpulent young man, whose head is encircled with

" vine-leaves: he has a paroquet on his shoulder, and is playing on " the guitar.

" Diameter, 7 inches 1-4th.

4. " Another circle, representing a naked Cupid, at the period " of adolescence, with a bandage over his eyes, and his wings ex- " tended. His arms are tied over his head to a tree, to which he " is also bound near the feet and at the waist. On each side of " him are two females, magnificently dressed in the fashion of the " time: the first, on the left side,* menaces him with a fan; the " second, with two arrows and a broken bow; the third, on the " opposite side, holds a quiver, and threatens him with a spindle, " and the fourth advances towards him with a knife.

" Diameter, 7 inches one-half.

5. " Another circle, wherein is represented the same Cupid; his " eyes bandaged, and his wings extended, with his hands tied be- " hind his back. On each side of him, as in the print last described, " are two women: the first seizes him by one of his wings; the " second pulls him by the ribbon which supports his quiver, and " menaces him with a battledore; the third is going to strike him " with a large sword, and the fourth has a pair of scissars.

" Diameter, 6 inches one-half.

6. " Another circle, surrounded by an ornament of foliage, " wherein are introduced eight ovals; each containing a Cupid " playing upon a musical instrument: beautiful little figures, exe- " cuted with great delicacy. In the round space, within this border,

* *Bartsch*, vol. xiii. p. 142, prefaces his account of these pieces by saying, " En " transcrivant ici le détail de M. Huber, " nous remarquerons seulement, que cet " auteur appelle le côté *droit* ce que nous " nommons le côté *gauche*, et vice versa." To preserve uniformity, therefore, in the present work, I have, where the *left* or the *right*-hand of the print is referred to, made the necessary alteration in the word. By the right, I mean that part of a print which is opposite to the right-hand of the spectator.

" are two heads of a man and a woman, in profile, looking at each " other: above is a small fillet, on which is written with the hand: " *dammi conforto.* Heineken, (Neue Nachrichten, p. 283,) does not " mention this inscription.

" Diameter, 7 inches 1-4th.

7. " Another circle, surrounded by a border of foliage, in which " are six upright ovals; each containing a Cupid playing on a " musical instrument; as in the preceding print. At the bottom is " another oval, lengthways; in which are two figures, lying on the " ground, of a naked woman, and a man who presents her with a " carnation. In the circle, in the middle, are two elegant figures of " a gentleman and lady dancing.

" Diameter, 8 inches.

8. " Another circle, with a border composed of fruits. The " middle represents a landscape, in which is seen a bear attacked " by five large dogs. Above, between two orange-trees, are two " cartouches, upon which the balls of the arms of the Medici family " are traced with a pen and ink, as in No. 2.

" Diameter, 8 inches.

9. " Another circle, in a little border. The scene represents a " garden, in the near-ground of which is a cavalier playing on the " guitar: he is seated by the side of a lady, finely dressed, who has " a garland, in one hand, and, in the other, a rose, and whose robe " is embroidered with pomegranates. Between these two figures, is " another lady standing, playing on a small harp; and above, " near an inclosure, two lovers are seen caressing each other. On " the right, is a table laid out with fruit, and a large vase.

" Diameter, 6 inches one-half.

10. " Another circle, surrounded by a small border of foliage. " The inside presents a monstrous face, seen in front, with large eyes,

" and two hands, which open the mouth with two of the fingers, in " such a manner as to shew all the teeth.

" Diameter, 7 inches 1-8th.

11. " Another round print, where, within a border of laurel, is a " cartouch, without any inscription; and, on each side, a medallion, " also in a border of laurel, attached, by ribbons, to that in the " middle. The medallion on the left contains the half-length " figure of a young man in profile, with a flower in his hand; that " on the right, a lady seen in front. Above, a dog is seen attack- " ing a stag, and a hare running away: below, a dog is seizing a " wild boar, and another dog is devouring a hare.

" Diameter, 6 inches.

12. " Another circle, in which is represented, in a landscape, a " lady, whose head is decorated with a large garland of flowers: she " is seated, holding a unicorn between her knees, which she caresses " with the one hand, whilst, with the other, she holds a collar, to " put about its neck; that she may tie it to the trunk of a tree, " which is behind her. At her feet is a little dog; and, on each " side, a tree, from which hangs a tablet, or cartouch, without any " inscription.

" Diameter, 6 inches 1-4th.

13. " Another circle, in which is represented Judith, standing, " dressed in the antique costume, and holding, in her left-hand, " the head of Holofernes, whilst, with her right, she brandishes an " enormous sabre over her head. The body of Holofernes is behind " her, extended on the ground. On each side is a tree; to the trunk " of one of which is affixed a cartouch, without inscription.

" Diameter, 5 inches 3-8ths.

14. " Another circle, representing the same subject; though with " some variation. Judith is standing, holding the head of Holo-

" fernes with one hand, and, with the other, a large sabre, the " point of which is inclined downwards. She is richly dressed, and " has a crown on her head. Behind her is the dead body, extended " on the ground.

" Diameter, 5 inches 1-4th.

15. " Another circle, in which are represented a gentleman and " a lady, promenading in a landscape ornamented with three " cypresses; and a young man in the fore-ground, playing on the " pipe and tabor.

" Diameter, 5 inches 5-8ths.

16. " Another circular print, in the middle of which is a space " intended to contain armorial bearings. On the right is a young " warrior, who holds a small scroll in his left-hand, on which is " written*—GIANSON. With his right-hand, he sustains a large " ornamental vase, assisted by a young female, dressed in the " Greek costume, who is placed on the other side of the print, and " who also holds a scroll, on which is written—MEDEA. Beneath is " a small figure of a ram.

" Diameter, 6 inches.

17. " Another circle, wherein, on the right of the print, is seen " a cavalier standing upon a piece of rock, holding in his right- " hand a scroll, containing these words—AMOR VUOL FE, E DOVE " FE NONNE—and sustaining a sphere; assisted by a female, dressed " after the antique costume, who is standing on a rock on the " opposite side of the print: she also holds a scroll, on which are " these words—AMOR NON PUO. The head of a cherubim serves " as support to a circle in the middle, which is left empty.

" Diameter, 5 inches 3-4ths.

* Query—if written or engraved?

18. " Another circle; in the middle of which is a globe, intended " to contain armorial bearings. On the right, is a young lady; " and, on the left, a young cavalier. These two figures hold a crown " of laurel over the globe. Above, in the air, is a Cupid, who " shoots an arrow at the cavalier; and beneath is a dog asleep upon " some herbage.

" Diameter, 4 inches 3-4ths.

19. " Another circle; in which is seen a man, whose hands and " arms are tied to a tree; and a woman, who is shewing him the " heart, which she has been tearing from his bosom: on each side is " an escutcheon hung to a tree.

" Diameter, 4 inches.

20. " Another circle, in which is represented a guardian angel, " with large extended wings, dressed in a pontifical habit and a " mitre, leading an infant by the hand: the back-ground is a " landscape.

" Diameter, 4 inches.

21. " An oval, 8 inches 1-4th in length, by 4 inches in height. " Two Cupids supporting, by long ribbons, a circular border of " fruits and foliage; in the midst of which is a little Cupid standing, " his eyes bandaged, and his wings extended, holding in one hand " his bow, and, in the other, an arrow.

22. " Another oval, 9 inches 1-4th in length, by 4 inches in " height. In the middle is represented a car, surmounted by a " trophy of gabions which throw out flames, and drawn by " Cupids; some playing on musical instruments, others carrying " torches. The procession is opened by a Cupid who bears a " standard ornamented with flames, on which is inscribed—PURITA; " and is terminated by another Cupid, bearing a similar standard, " on which are these words—AL FUOGEDIL.

23. " Another oval, 7 inches 3-8ths in length, by 2 inches 3-8ths " in height, representing two females elegantly dressed, seated " in a landscape, and supporting a border formed of two cornu- " copias. The circular space in the middle is empty. A fine " impression.

24. " Another oval, 6 inches 3-4ths in length, by 2 inches 3-4ths " in height, representing two warriors, each with one knee on the " ground, who support an escutcheon of an octagon form, on which " is the figure of a female, dressed in the antique costume, with her " hands raised towards heaven."

Heineken says, that these pieces do not appear to have been printed with a press; but, in the manner described by Vasari, by the application of a common roller moved backwards and forwards. The impression of one of them, No. 6, is, he adds, taken off double, in consequence of the paper having got a crease during the operation. Huber observes of them generally, that they are, for the most part, well printed and in good preservation.

Heineken and Huber both remark of the two first of these prints, that they appear to have been engraved ON the tops of boxes; an assertion which seems ill to accord with the circumstance of the inscription upon No. 1, being in its proper direction. At least it is so in Heineken's copy; and that inscription, unlike the inscriptions and the arms of the Medici family on No. 2, (which, in the original, are added with a pen,) bears every mark of an engraved inscription. It is, indeed possible, that in the original of No. 1, the inscription may be reversed; and that Heineken's engraver, who, most probably, worked only from a finished tracing, may have erroneously copied the wrong side of that tracing. Such an error, in case he had not been apprised of the peculiar nature of the original print, and, consequently, of the importance of the circumstance, would, indeed, be extremely likely to happen: certainly much more so than that the German critic should not have re-

flected, that if the figures, with the inscription, had been engraved on the top of a box, that inscription would naturally have been engraved in the direction used in writing, from left to right; and that consequently, in such case, the inscription in the impression would appear, as in oriental writings, from right to left. Huber, however, who wrote after Heineken, has given no explanation of the apparent anomaly, and Bartsch copies the descriptions of the last mentioned writer, verbatim, without comment. The reader is, therefore, left to determine the point in question upon the preponderance of probabilities; and I will only add concerning it, that the circular or oval form of most of these engravings, is in favour of the supposition, that they are really the impressions taken by some goldsmith, from engravings executed upon plate, or other ornamental furniture; and that the probability of such being the case, is further strengthened by the circumstance that, with the exception of No. 4, of which Bartsch informs us he saw a duplicate, they appear to be unique.

Amongst the first uses to which the new art of chalcography appears to have been applied, was that of making almanacks, playing cards, and, we may doubtless add, devotional pieces. Of the former kind, Strutt discovered a set of engravings, in the collection of Dr. Monro, which are certainly of the old Florentine school, and most probably by Baldini; at least they bear so strong a resemblance of manner to the three prints in the *Monte Santo di Dio*, and several other pieces usually ascribed to that engraver, as to leave no doubt that they are by the same hand. It is, however, proper to observe, that the impressions of these engravings, which are now preserved in the collection of the British Museum, appear to have been taken off after the plates had been worn by repeated use, and rudely retouched all over; so that they want much of that softness and delicacy of appearance, which no doubt the early impressions possessed: it is remarkable that, nevertheless, no other

impressions of them are known. We shall describe them in Mr. Strutt's own words.*

'These curious and valuable specimens of ancient engraving, which, I believe,' says Mr. Strutt, 'are unique, must have been executed as early as the year 1464 . . . . . The set consists of eight plates; namely, the seven planets, and an almanack, by way of frontispiece, on which are directions for finding Easter, from the year 1465 to 1517 inclusive; and the dates regularly follow each other, which plainly proves that there can be no mistake with respect to the first; and we may be well assured, in this case, the engravings were not antedated; for the almanack of course became less and less valuable every year.' . . . . . .

I. 'The almanack,' continues Mr. Strutt, 'exhibits a calendar of the saints' days, and a calculation of the day on which Easter would fall, from 1465 to 1517 inclusive. Upon twelve small circles in the middle of the plate, are represented the employments for the twelve months of the year, with the zodiacal sign belonging to each month; and the gradual increase and decrease of the days, is expressed by the extent of the shadow upon the border, within which these delineations are inclosed. They are as follow:

'JANUARY. An elderly gentleman seated at a table, spread with provisions, near the fire, holding a glass with liquor in his hand.

'FEBRUARY. The gardener digging his ground.

'MARCH. The employment of the two figures represented in this compartment is rather obscure; probably the man is planting shrubs or herbs in the garden, according to the direction of the lady who is standing by him.

* Dictionary of Engravers, vol. i. p. 15, and pp. 25. 26. 27. Mr. Strutt has also given very faithful copies of two of these pieces; the almanack and the planet Venus, Pl. II. and III. of the same work.

'APRIL. Hawking, and hunting the hare.
'MAY. Running at the ring.
'JUNE. Mowing.
'JULY. Gathering in corn, and thrashing.
'AUGUST. Sickness: the doctor is examining the urinal.
'SEPTEMBER. Gathering grapes.
'OCTOBER. Making wine.
'NOVEMBER. Ploughing.
'DECEMBER. Killing of swine, and providing good fare for Christmas.

'The following directions are written in Italian, at the bottom of the plate: *If you will know when Easter shall be, find the date of the year in this engraving, the letter A standing for April, and the letter M for March.*

II. 'This plate represents the planet Venus: she appears in the clouds, riding in her chariot drawn by doves, accompanied by Cupid, who has just discharged an arrow at one of the ladies standing in a balcony: at a distance we see an unfortunate lover upon his knees, invoking the assistance of the deity: the rest of the figures appear to be immediately under the direction of her powerful influence. On the wheels of her chariot are represented the Bull and the Balance, with these inscriptions—TORO and BILANCE—the signs of the zodiac, over which this planet was supposed to preside.

'At the bottom of this, and the six other plates, are inscriptions, importing the properties of the planets represented upon them. I shall give the following entire as a specimen for the whole.

VENERE . E SEGNO . FEMININO . POSTA . NEL TERZO . CIELO . FREDDA . E VMIDA . TENPERATA LA QUALE . AQVESTE . PROPRIETA . EAMA BELLI . VESTIMENTI . ORNATI DORO . E DARGENTO . E CHANZONE E GAVDII . E GVOCHI . ET . E LACIVA . ET HA DOLCE PARLARE . EBELLA NELLIOCHI . E NELLA . FRONTE . E DI . CORPO . LEGGIERI . PIENA . DI CARNE . E DI .

MEZZANA . STATVRA . DATA . A . TVTTI . OPERE . CIRCA . ALLA . BELIZZA . ET . E SOTTO POSTO . ALLEI . LOTTONE E . IL . SVO . GIORNO . EVENERDI . E LA . PRIMA . HORA . 8 . 15 . ET 22 . E . LA . NOTTE . SVA . E MARTE DI . E IL . SVOAMICO . E GIOVE . EL NIMICO . MERCVRIO . ET . HA . DVE HABITATIONNI . EL . TORO . DI . GIORNO . E LIBRA . DI . NOTTE . E PER CONSIGLIERE . EL . SOLE . E LAVITE . SVA . EXALTATIONE . EIL PESCE . ELA MORTE EDVMILIAZIONE . E VIRGO . E . VA . IN 10 MESI . 12 SENGI . INCOMINCANDO . DA LIBERA . E IN 25 . GIORNO . VA VNO . SENGNO . EIN . VN GIORNO . VA VNO GRADO . E 12 MINVTI . E . IN VNA ORA . 30 MINVTI.

[It is not worth while to attempt the translation of this astrological stuff, and we, therefore, immediately proceed to Mr. Strutt's description of the next plate.]

III. 'GIOVE—Jupiter. He is seated in his chariot, in the clouds, with a crown upon his head, and a dart in his left-hand; before him is represented Ganymede, kneeling, with a small vase in one hand, and a cup in the other. The chariot is drawn by two eagles; and on the wheels are the two signs, Sagittarius and the Fishes, with the words SAGITARIO and PISCE. The distance is a mountainous country, with figures, on horseback and on foot, hunting and hawking: in the fore-ground, towards the right, we see an emperor upon his throne, with figures, doing him homage; and, to the left, three figures, representing (as it is supposed) Boccacio, Dante, and Petrarch, seated in an alcove, &c. with the inscription underneath, beginning thus:—

GIOVE . EPIANETA . MASCVLINO . POSTO . NEL SESTO . CIELO . CALDO . E HVMIDO . TEMPERATO . DI NATURA . DARIA . DOLCE . SANGVIGNO . SPERANTE, &c.

IV. 'SOLE—the Sun. He is represented, splendidly armed, with a crown upon his head, and seated in his chariot, drawn by four horses; upon the chariot-wheel is the zodiacal sign of the Lion, inscribed beneath, LEO. In the back-ground, we see a castle upon a hill, and some figures shooting at a mark with cross-bows: near

them are two men, praying to a crucifix; others are diverting themselves with mock fights; and a laughable figure of a dwarf is standing by them, with a sword under his arm: others, again, are throwing stones and wrestling; whilst, in the front, an emperor is seated, and three tumblers are depicted before him, exhibiting their feats of activity. The inscription begins in this manner:—

SOLE . E . PIANETA . MASCVLINO . POSTO . NEL QVARTO . CIELO . CALDO . E . SECHO . INFOCATO . CHOLERICO . DI COLORE . DORO, &c.

V. 'MARTE—Mars. He is seated in his chariot, drawn by two horses, and represented completely armed, with wings upon his head, and a sword in his right-hand: upon the wheels of the chariot, are the Ram and the Scorpion, two signs of the zodiac, and under them is written—ARIETE and SCARPIONE. At a small distance is a castle, with figures fighting before it, and a man is represented ringing the alarm-bell: in the fore-ground, a foraging party of soldiers are seen falling upon a company of herdsmen, and seizing their cattle: the inscription begins in the following manner:—

MARTE . ESENGNO . MASCVLINI . POSTO . NEL QVARTO*. CEILO . MOLTO . CALDO . FOCOSO . ET HA QVESTE . PROPRIETE . DAMARE . MILIZIA . BATTAGLE . ET UCCISIONI . MALIGNO . DISCORDINATO, &c.

VI. 'SATVRNO—Saturn. He is seated in his chariot, drawn by two dragons: in his right-hand he holds a scythe; and upon the wheels of the chariot are two signs, the Goat and the Water-bearer, inscribed CAPRICORNO and AQVARIO. The distant country is bounded with mountains, and with castles; and a figure is represented hanging upon a gallows, holding a cross in his hands: near to the spectator, is seen a man, ploughing with two oxen, in a large space overflowed with water; and other men are thrashing corn in the

* I suspect this word should be QUINTO, as in another print of the same subject, which will presently be described. I have trusted, however, to Mr. Strutt's accuracy, in giving these inscriptions.

open field. Towards the left, appears an hermitage, surmounted with a cross; and the hermit is seated at the door, near which is a man cutting wood, and two other labourers with their tools: in the fore-ground, to the right, is a prison, and before it, a man, seated, with his legs and arms in the stocks, and two grotesque figures are standing in the front: towards the left, are men killing hogs, one of which is hanged upon a tree. The inscription at bottom begins as follows:

SATVRNO . E PIANETA . MASCVLINO . POSTO . NEL SETIMO . CIELO . FRIDDO . E SECHO . MA . ACCIDEITALMENTE . HVMIDO . DI NATVRA . DI TERRA, &c.

VII. 'MERCVRIO—Mercury. He is represented in his chariot, holding his caduceus, and drawn by two birds, like hawks: on the wheels of his chariot, are two zodiacal signs, the Virgin and the Twins, inscribed, VIRGO and GEMINI. We are here presented with the inside of a city: in the back-ground, is a view of a street; and, in the front, towards the right, a large building, which the workmen are decorating with ornaments: below, appears the potter, with a variety of small vessels; and, in the front, the sculptor, carving a head in stone: above him are two philosophers, holding a celestial sphere, and, near them, a table, covered with viands: in the building, towards the left, we see a musician, playing upon an organ. It is singular enough, that the bellows, by means of which the instrument is supplied with wind, resembles the common bellows which we have in our houses at this day: in a compartment below, are two figures at a table, writing; and a third is regulating a clock. The perspective, in which science the artist had here an opportunity of shewing his abilities, is most dreadfully defective. The inscription at the bottom begins in this manner:—

MERCVRIO . E PIANETA . MASCVLINO . POSTO NEL SECONDO . CIELO . ET SECHO . MA PERCHE . LA SVA . SICCITA . E MOLTO . PASSIVA LVI . E FREDO, &c.

VIII. 'LVNA—the Moon. She is seated in her chariot, drawn by two females, holding a bow in her left-hand, and a dart in her right: upon the wheel of the chariot is the zodiacal sign of the Crab, with the Latin name, CANCER, written underneath it. The distance represents a mountainous country, with a castle and a town, very rudely executed. Nearer to the eye, is a fowler, setting his nets; figures, fishing, in a boat; and a man shooting at a flock of birds with a bow and arrow: near him, some people are seated at a table, playing at dice: in the fore-ground, towards the left, is a water-mill, part of the wheel of which appears; and a bridge over the river, upon which we see a man on horseback, and an ass fallen down under his load: beneath the bridge are naked figures, in the water, fishing with a net. The inscription at the bottom of the plate begins as follows:—

LA LVNA . E PIANETA . FEMININO . POSTO . NEL PRIMO . CIELO . FREDA . E . VMIDA . FLEMATECHA . MEZANA TRA EL MONDO . SVPERIORE ET LO . INFERIORE . AMA . LA GEOMETRIA, &c.'

The above series of engravings, admitting Mr. Strutt's argument as to their date to be conclusive, as appears to have been universally allowed, is decisive evidence of the early establishment of chalcography at Florence, where, without doubt, they were executed.

It is probable, that in Italy, as we know to have been the case in Germany,* it had been the custom, long previous to the invention of typography, to manufacture almanacks by means of wood engraving; and that such things were sold by those who dealt in

* A large folio work has been for some time publishing in Germany, in parts, containing the impressions of a great number of ancient engraved blocks still in existence. Of the two first parts of this work, I have seen a copy in the possession of my friend Mr. Douce. Amongst the contents of one of them, is a very curious almanack, embellished, like the almanack in the British Museum above described, by twelve circles, representing the occupations of the twelve months of the year. There appears to be good grounds for supposing that it was executed between the years 1430 and 1440.

playing-cards, the images of saints, and, perhaps, in various articles of stationery. Upon the discovery of chalcography, the Florentines, who had not yet received among them the invention of typography, appear to have applied their new art to similar purposes of utility or amusement; and it is certain that the artist, by whom the series above described was engraved, executed more works of the same kind than one.

Two prints of the planets, belonging to another set of larger dimensions, and, apparently, somewhat still more ancient, are in the valuable collections of Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Douce. These pieces measure ten inches and seven-eighths in height, (independent of the inscriptions underneath them, which occupy about one inch and seven-eighths more,) by eight inches and seven-sixteenths in breadth; and are both of them early impressions; taken before the plates had suffered, as is the case with those in the British Museum, by retouching. The general subjects* represented in these two prints, are much the same as in the corresponding pieces of the set above described, but the arrangement of the groups is in some degree varied.

Mr. Lloyd's print represents the PLANET MARS—

The God is seated in his chariot on the clouds, and is drawn by two horses. He is completely armed, with wings to his helmet, and grasps a sword in his right hand. His name, MARTE, appears on a label over the chariot, and the signs of the zodiac, ISCAR-

* The subjects introduced in the many sets of the Planets which appear to have been engraved in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in Italy and Germany, (and, perhaps, I might add France) were, if I may be allowed the expression, conventional: so much so, that a set of wood-prints of the seven Planets, in my possession, probably executed in Nuremberg, about 1520, might be described in nearly the same words as were used by Strutt in describing the above. The designer, it is true, often varied the arrangement of his compositions; but the general occupations of the chief groups represented in these sets of the Planets, appear to have been for the most part strictly adhered to.

PIONI and ARIETE, are inscribed on other labels, underneath the wheels.

In the back-ground, on the right-hand, is a fortified castle, surrounded by a moat, in which a man is seen ringing the alarm-bell. Without the castle is a soldier standing, with a spear in his right hand, and his left resting on his shield. More in the centre are four figures fighting, and behind them is a large bonfire. Upon an eminence, on the left, a drummer is stationed beating his drum.

The fore-ground is occupied by a numerous party of soldiers, who are assailing a party of peasantry, and endeavouring to carry off their women and cattle. Towards the centre of this group, a soldier is seen embracing a female with both his arms, and a countryman, who, in the struggle, has fallen to the ground, is endeavouring to free her from his grasp; whilst a second soldier, behind the woman, appears aiming a blow with an axe at a large dog which is flying at him. Behind this soldier and the dog, a third soldier is endeavouring forcibly to bear away another female. Further to the right, is a peasant with his spade uplifted; and near him is a dog, and two children running away terrified. A little to the left, a peasant is extended dead on the ground, and another appears to have just received a wound in the neck from the lance of a soldier, whose helmet is decorated with two wings. Behind these figures, on the left, a troop of cavalry are represented, driving before them the sheep and oxen which they have seized. A second party of cavalry, completely armed, with their visors closed, are arriving on the right. The inscription commences:

MARTE . E . SEGNO . MASCULINO . POSTO NEL QUINTO CIELO MOLTO CALDO FOCOSO . E A QUESTE P|* ROPRIETA DAMARE MILITIA BATTAGLIE ET UCCISIONI . MALIGNO DISORDINATO, &c.

This piece possesses a considerable share of spirit and expression.

* This perpendicular mark is here introduced to shew the termination of the line in the original. It is remarkable that the artist commences the next line of the inscription with the second letter of the word *proprieta*.

The impression is taken off with a light grey colour, approaching to green, but apparently by means of a press.

The print in the possession of Mr. Douce represents the Moon.

LUNA—the Moon. She is seated in her chariot, in the clouds, and drawn by two females, elegantly dressed. She has a bow in her left-hand, and an arrow in her right; and upon the wheel of her chariot, which is directed towards the left, is the zodiacal sign of the Crab—but without the name CANCER found in the corresponding print of the series in the British Museum. Her title, LUNA, is engraved on a label at the top of the print. The extreme distance rises so high, in the composition, as almost to touch the chariot: it represents, in the middle, a large stream of water, which is joined by a smaller stream, and appears to take its course towards the fore-ground, where part of it passes under a bridge of two arches, and gives motion to a water-mill. In the distance, on the right-hand of the river, several men are seen, catching birds; and, a little nearer, on the same side, a gentleman and lady, seated in an arbour, are amusing themselves with the same diversion, by means of nets. The extreme distance, on the left, represents a castle, with a flag flying upon it, situated on a rocky mount; and, on the middle-ground, on that side, a group of several men are amused at a circular table, by the tricks of a juggler. Near this group are two young men with bows. Upon the river, two other men, in a boat, are employed in fishing with a net.

From the off-wall of the bridge, in the fore-ground, rises a column, supporting a sun-dial; and, upon the bridge, is a man, seated on a horse, with two sacks of grain, which he is bringing to the mill, on the right, to be ground: behind him is an ass, fallen down under the load of two other sacks, and two men, who are endeavouring to raise the animal, by pulling at its tail and at the halter. In the water, under the bridge, two naked figures are bathing, and others are fishing with a net. At the door of the mill a man is seen tying up the mouth of a sack.

With the permission of Mr. Douce, the reader is here presented with a careful copy of the chariot of Luna; and perhaps he will be of opinion with the author, that the two female figures, drawing the car, possess much spirit and elegance. I must not omit to observe of this interesting print, that, unlike the planet Mars in Mr. Lloyd's collection, it is printed with dark oil colour, and is, in every respect, a good impression—a sufficient proof, if its supposed antiquity be admitted, that the example of the old engravers of Germany was not necessary, as Bartsch affirms, to instruct the Italians in the mode of taking the impressions of their engravings.

My opinion, that the series, of which the two engravings last described formed a part, are more ancient than those described by Strutt, is principally formed upon the greater rudeness of the orthography, in the inscriptions underneath them; and the circumstance of the numerous repetitions which occur in them of the letter S, appearing always (or with only one exception) in a reversed direction; whereas, in the inscriptions on the almanack and the accom-

panying planets, described by Strutt, that letter is generally represented in its proper direction. An engraver, whose chief occupation in the early part of his life, had been to engrave figures and inscriptions for the decoration of plate, would, for a long time, be liable to similar errors; and, indeed, they occur, though less frequently, in the inscriptions on one of the plates, by the same artist, in the *Monte Santo di Dio.*

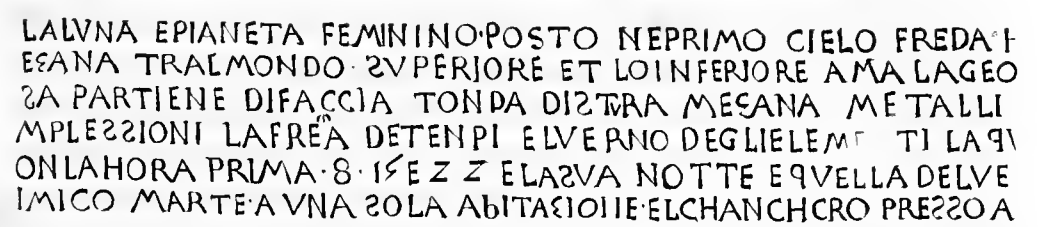
The orthography of the inscription, under Mr. Douce's print, is carefully attended to in the following transcript:—

LA LUNA EPIANETA FEMININO . POSTO NEPRIMO CIELO FREDA . HE VMIDA ET FLEMATICHA . M * | EZANA TRALMONDO SUPERIORE ET LO INFERIORE AMA LA GEOMETRIA ET CIO CHE A ESSA | SA PARTIENE DIFACCIA TONDA DISTURA *(di statura)* MEZANA METALLI AL ARGIENTEO DELLE CHONP | MPLESSIONI LA FREA DETENPI ELVERNO DEGLIELEMENTI LAQUA EL DI SUO E IL VENERDI CH | ON LA HORA PRIMA . 8 . 15 E 22 E LA SUA NOTTE E QUELLA DEL VENERDI AMICO SUO E GIOVE IN | IMICO MARTE . A UNA SOLA ABITAZIONE . EL CHANCHRO PRESSO A SOLE EMETRCHURIO *(mercurio)* . LA ESAL | TAZIONE SUA . E IL TAURO LA MORTE . OVERO . VMILIAZIONE . E SCORPIO . VA . IN . 12 . SENGNI . IN . 28 . DI . COMICIANDO | DAL CHANCRO . IN 2 . DI . E ½ . VA . UN SENGNIO . 13 GRADI . PERDI . 32 . MINUTI 56 . SECONDI . PEDRORA . E IN 28 DI . A DISCOR | SI . E .... 12 SENGNI CHONPUTAMENTE . E PIU 8 GRADI . E 26 MINUTI . E 20 . SECHONDI P *(per)* QUESTO SIDIMOSRA, &c.

The remaining two lines of the inscription are so much rubbed, and otherwise mutilated, as to be illegible.

The annexed fac-simile of part of the first six lines will convey some idea of the rudeness of the original.

* As in a recent page, the perpendicular marks here introduced are intended to denote the terminations of the lines in the original inscription.


LALVNA EPIANETA FEMININO·POSTO NEPRIMO CIELO FREDA·I
ESANA TRALMONDO·2VPERIORE ET LOINFERIORE AMALAGEO
2A PARTIENE DIFACCIA TONDA DIZTRA MESANA METALLI
MPLESSIONI LAFREA DETENPI ELVERNO DEGLIELEM TI LAQ\
ONLAHORA PRIMA·8·IFEZZ ELA2VA NOTTE EQVELLA DELVE
IMICO MARTE·AVNA 2OLA ABITA2IOIIE·ELCHANCHCRO PRE22OA

The engraving now about to be described, if admitted to be the work of Baldini, (and it certainly bears every appearance of having been executed by the same hand that engraved the planets above described) furnishes a justification of the opinion already given; that Vasari's assertion, that all Baldini's plates were engraved from the designs of Botticelli, is not to be taken in a strictly literal sense.

This curious print is no other than a copy of the picture representing HELL, executed in fresco, in the fourteenth century, by BERNARDO ORCAGNA, in the Campo Santo of Pisa; and still in existence, although injured by retouching. The painter is said to have taken for his model the description of Dante.

A large hideous figure of Lucifer, having three faces, with the three mouths of which he is devouring human creatures, forms the principal object, in the centre of the composition. He has another face, with a mouth, at the bottom of the abdomen, out of which a minor devil is pulling the undigested body of Simon Magus, whose name, in characters reversed, is inscribed on a label. He grasps two other men in his hands, who, at the same time, are bitten by two serpents which are twisted round his arms. Seven more unhappy criminals with caps on their heads, are within the grasp of the large claws with which he is provided instead of feet. The names of Nebuchadnesar, Julian the Apostate, and Attila—and another name which I cannot satisfactorily decipher—are inscribed in small characters on four of the caps. The remainder of the composition is intersected by three horizontal divisions, so as to form four separate plains or friezes. In the bottom division, on the left,

one man is tormented by having melted lead poured down his throat; a second has his tongue pulled out; the teeth of a third are knocked down his throat; and a fourth has his head sawn in two: on the right, several men are roasted alive, one of them being transfixed by a spit, whilst others are tormented by serpents and red hot pincers. Serpents constitute the chief mode of torment in the second division, on the left of Lucifer; but, on the right, a party of people, who appear to have a keen appetite, are constrained to starve, whilst standing round a table covered with good fare. In the third division, on the left, men are, again, tormented by serpents; and, on the right, a multitude of the wicked are immersed in a large reservoir of boiling sulphur, and tormented by three devils with pitchforks. The upper division, which alone is not, in any part, covered by the gigantic figure of Lucifer, represents men holding their severed heads in their hands; others hanging by the head or the heels; and others flayed alive, or cut in pieces. The right hand of this compartment is terminated by an enormous open mouth, into which a man is dragged by a little devil in the form of a cat, whilst a second is carried in upon another devil's shoulders. At the two upper corners of this piece, are two small holes,* such as Lanzi speaks of. In the left upper corner is this inscription, in characters strictly resembling those on the planets above mentioned: QUESTO . ELINFERNO . DEL . CHAPOSANTO . DI PISA.

The original plate, which has, doubtless, been often retouched, is still in existence at Pisa; and impressions from it are inserted in the first Volume of the PISA ILLUSTRATA of *Morrona*, 1787. It measures, within the marginal line, ten inches and seven-eighths in width, by eight inches and a half in height.

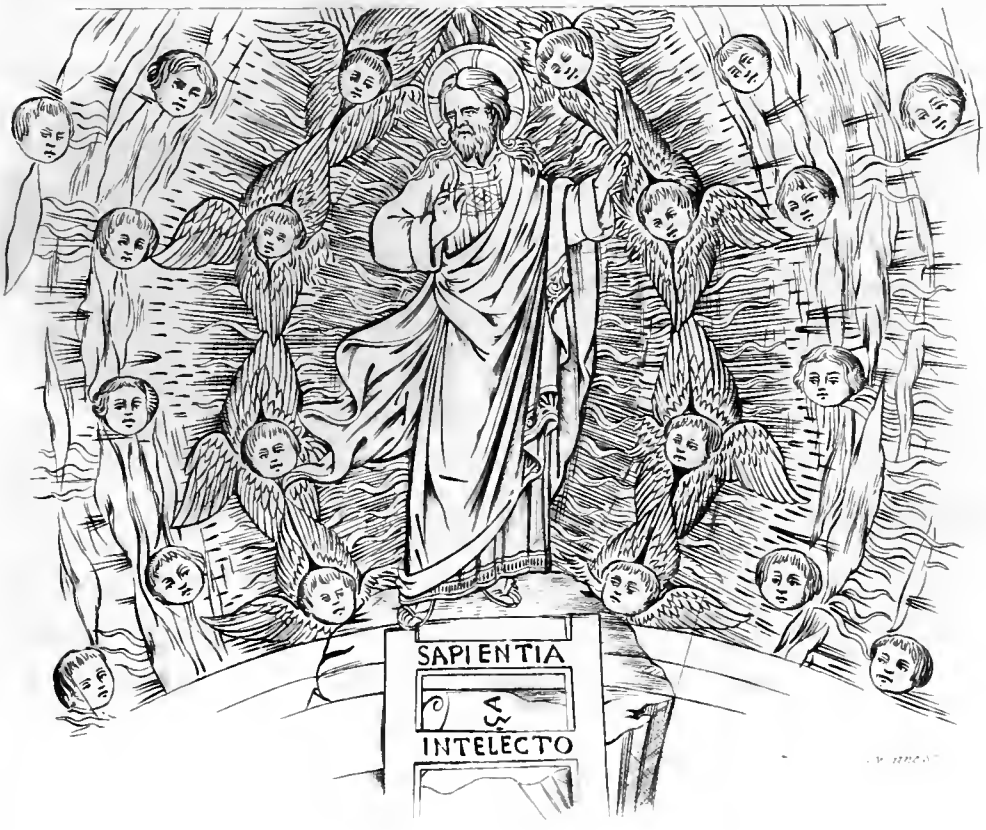
The engravings of the Planets, and the representation of Hell, above described, bear, I think, too striking a resemblance to the three prints in the *Monte Santo di Dio*, of which we are about to speak, to leave a doubt of their being the work of the same artist. In these last, however, Baldini was, I am of opinion, assisted

* See pp. 335, 336.

by the drawings of his friend Sandro Botticelli; at least it is certain that the first and the second print, partake considerably of that artist's style of design.

Engravings in the MONTE SANCTO DI DIO, *published at Florence, by Nicolo di Lorenzo della Magna, in* 1477.

I. In the first piece which occurs on the reverse of the last page of the Index, opposite the first Chapter of the work, a rocky mountain rises with a rapid ascent, and in a pyramidal form, to more than two thirds the height of the print. Upon the summit of this mountain stands the figure of Christ, enveloped in glory, and surrounded by eight cherubims, four on each side; the clouds on either hand, being also interspersed with the heads of cherubs, ranged symmetrically at regular distances. The annexed engraving will give a sufficiently good idea of the figure of Christ, with the celestial attendants by which he is immediately environed.



From the middle of the print, at bottom, a ladder rises to the top of the Mount, which a good friar is represented as beginning to ascend. On the ground, at bottom, is written HUMILTA, and upon the steps of the ladder are inscribed PRUDENTIA . TEMPERANTIA . FORTEZZA . JUSTITIA . TIMORE . PIETA . SCIENTIA . FORTEZZA, (for the second time) CONSIGLIO . INTELLECTO . SAPIENTIA. On the shafts of the ladder are these words ORATIONE . SACRAMENTO. Half way up the mount, on the right of the ladder, is a figure of Christ on the Cross, near which are written the words FEDE & CARITA. The friar on the ladder addresses his prayers to this crucifix in the following words, inscribed on a label, which proceeds out of his mouth: TIRAMI DOPPO TE. At the bottom of the mount, on the right, are the words COGNOSCIMENTO DILATATO; and half way down it, on the left, is the word SPERANZA: the word PERSEVERANZA appears through the spokes of the ladder. On the left of the print is the figure of a young man, richly dressed in the fashion of the time, standing; his eyes elevated towards heaven, and his left hand raised over his head, as if to prevent his being overpowered by the brilliancy of the glory above. The following ejaculatory inscription is on a scroll near him: LEVAVI OCULOS MEOS Ī MONTES UNDE VENIAT AUSILIUM MICHI AUSILIUM MEUM A DOMINO. The left leg of this young man is bound by a ribbon or bandage, inscribed CECITA, which is held by a demon at bottom, who has also a long iron hook, with which he assails his desired victim.

This plate, within the black line which bounds the subject, measures nine inches and seven-eighths in height, by seven inches in width. The figure of the young man, which possesses a considerable share of easy gracefulness, is copied in the annexed plate. It will also be found, accompanied by the friar about to ascend the ladder, in the Bibliotheca Spenceriana, vol. iv. p. 30.

II. The second print is inserted on the reverse of signature n. viij. opposite the first chapter of the second book of the work, which treats of the glory of Paradise.

The centre of this piece is occupied by a majestic figure of Christ, standing in a glory of flames, of an oval shape, but pointed at top and at bottom: this glory is supported by six angels and ten cherubim,

who are placed at regular distances around. Our Saviour is represented with his left-hand on his bosom, and his right-hand elevated, as if in the act of giving the benediction. The whole measures ten inches and a quarter in height by seven inches in width. Mr. Dibdin has had a correct copy of the Christ and two of the angels engraved for the fourth volume of his Bibliotheca Spenceriana.*

III. The third and last print with which this curious volume is enriched, is introduced at the bottom of the page, sig. p. vij. at the end of the second book, and is a representation of HELL—preparatory to the third and last division of the work, which treats of the punishments of the damned.

This print is of considerably smaller dimensions than the other two, and of a different form. It measures about six inches and a half in width, by four inches and three quarters in height. The centre represents a colossal figure of Lucifer, standing up to his middle in a large basin of pitch, or some other infernal fluid, cut in the rock. He is seen in front, and has two horns and two large ears: his shoulders are furnished with a pair of bat's wings, which rise to the top of the print, and his body and arms are covered with hair. He has three mouths, with which he is devouring the wicked; two of whom he also grasps in his hands. On either side of Lucifer are three caverns, in which the reprobate are tormented in various manners. In the upper cavern, on the right, a devil is tearing out the entrails of one man; a second man, whose body is surrounded by a serpent, appears hanging, with his head downwards; and a third is holding his head, which has been cut off, in his hands. In the cavern immediately underneath, four culprits, amongst whom is a bishop, are placed around a table covered with viands, of which they are not allowed to partake; and in the bottom cavern, three men are immersed up to the neck in a

* Sir Mark M. Sykes also possesses a copy of this very rare book, which formerly belonged to the Ricardi family of Florence, and from which, with his permission, the fac-similes, given in this work, have been engraved.

cauldron of boiling fluid. In the upper cavern, on the left, one of the wicked is tormented by a devil with a flaming torch, and a second is cut with an axe. In the cavern underneath are three of the damned, one of them with a regal crown, enveloped in flames, and beaten by a devil with a rod. In the lowest cavern, on this side, a devil is seen pouring melted lead, or perhaps gold, down the throat of one of the reprobate (perhaps a miser), and another devil is emptying a large bag of money into a vase. In a seventh cavern, which is seen at top, between the wings of Lucifer, is a monstrous dragon's head, into the open mouth of which a devil is thrusting another of the wicked.

I now come to speak of the set of fifty prints, supposed to have been intended for playing-cards, and called by the Italian writers, Il Giuoco di Tarocchi. Bartsch asserts, as has been observed, that they are by the same artist* that engraved the twenty-four pieces in the collection of M. Otto; and I give the more credit to the assurance, as it appears to be confirmed upon a comparison of several of them with the copies, given by Heineken, of two of M. Otto's prints, and repeated in this work.

It is proper, however, to premise, that the fifty pieces called Il Giuoco di Tarocchi, appear to have been anciently engraved more than once; and that, in the opinion above stated, I refer, like Bartsch, to that set of which the five different classes are distinguished by the initials E. D. C. B. A.† Zani considers this set the original, whilst Bartsch (vol. xiii. p. 120) gives the preference to a second set, the five classes of which are marked with the letters S. D. C. B. A.

* *Bartsch*, vol. xiii. p. 142, speaks with great confidence on this point. Prefatory to his description of the twenty-four prints in M. Otto's possession, he says: "Nous "n'avons vû de ces pièces qu'une seule, "savoir No. 4.; mais cette seule a suffi "pour nous convaincre qu'elles n'ont sûre- "ment pas été gravées par *Maso Fini-* "*guerra*, comme quelques auteurs ont été "tenté de le présumer, mais bien par le "même anonyme qui a gravé les cartes de "tarot décrites ci-dessus aux Numéros "18. 67."

† *Zani* observes, in speaking of the pieces of the Giuoco di Tarocchi, (Materiali, note 69, p. 149,) "that he has found these

The last-named writer mentions his having seen also a few pieces of a third set, which he considers rather less ancient.

Lanzi,* and, after him, Zani, ascribed these engravings to the schools of Venice or Padua; chiefly, I believe, because the titles under a few of the figures, appear to be written, as they say, in the Venetian dialect—as *Doxe, Artixan, Famejo,* &c. It may appear ill to become me to express any doubt as to the authority of the Italian writers above mentioned, in matters respecting their own language; nor, were there good ground for such doubt, am I prepared for the question. I must, nevertheless, observe that, upon some occasions, and especially in Latinizing proper names, the Italians of even the sixteenth century, appear to have used the x instead of the s. Of this I have now an example before me, in a print of a group of Venus and Cupid; one of a set of antique statues coarsely engraved at Rome between the years 1550 and 1555. The marble belonged to the sculptor and architect Gio. Ant. Dosio, and the inscription under the figures runs thus: *Veneris Signum Romæ in ædibus Joannis Antonij Doxij Architecti.* This print is numbered 70, at the right-hand bottom corner: the name of Dosio, under a statue of Bacchus,

" letters thus interpreted: A. *Tutto*; B. *Bas-*
" *tone*; C. *Coppe*; D. *Danari*; E. *Spade.*
" What weight is due to such an explanation," says he, " will be seen in my work, at the " article concerning *playing-cards*, Part II. " Class V. In the mean time, I will observe " that, in the copies which we have of this " set of cards, the ten pieces, forming the " first class, are marked with the letter S. " instead of the E. The S." he adds, " will " do perfectly well for *Spada*:—must we, " therefore, read the E. in the original set, " *Epée*, in French?—But of this in another " place." *Zani*, upon this occasion, as in many other parts of his volume, tantalizes his reader, by hinting that he is in possession of the means of unravelling every difficulty, but that he reserves their application to his promised more extensive work. Perhaps, being destitute of his means of determining the question, I might hazard too much, were I to suggest that, in old Italian orthography, the words *Spada* or *Spadone* might sometimes have been improperly written *Espada* or *Espadone.* The redundant letter I. in ISCARPIONI, in Mr. Lloyd's print of the planet Mars, described in a former page of this chapter, appears to be something of this kind.

* " Storia Pittorica," tom. i. p. 82. Lanzi, however, does not appear to speak so positively as to this point as *Zani.*

No. 83, of, I believe, the same set of prints, is properly spelt with an s. Independently, of the possibility that examples may hereafter be found of the use of such words as *Doxe, Artixan, Famejo,* &c. in the fifteenth century, in other parts of Italy, as well as in the Venetian state, I must further remark, that these figures, being intended for playing-cards, (which had hitherto been, at least very chiefly, manufactured in the Venetian state,) the engraver, although a Florentine, might probably consider it necessary to conform, in some degree, to the customary orthography in the titles underneath them; I say in some degree, because in most cases, the orthography of the inscriptions will do quite as well for the old Florentine dialect as for any other. I shall, however, leave to others, the task of accounting more satisfactorily for the orthography in a few of the inscriptions, and shall proceed to enumerate the pieces; fully satisfied, as I am, that they are by the hand of a Florentine artist. Indeed they closely resemble the pieces of the Monte Santo di Dio, in the mechanism of engraving; and many of the figures are designed so much in the style of Botticelli, as to give reason to believe that the engraver was assisted by his drawings, at least in some of them.*

* I will not, however, omit to mention a circumstance noticed by Zani, (Materiale, p. 71,) lest it should be supposed that I keep back an argument which some may be of opinion opposes the supposition that these prints of *Il giuoco di Tarocchi* were engraved by Baldini; viz. "that on the print "representing POESIA, xxvii. 27, the letter "C. distinguishing that class, is joined to "another letter, so as to form," says Zani, "the mark CF or CE, or perhaps a Gothic "E only. But of this mark," continues Zani, "I shall speak in another place:"—that is, in his promised Dictionary. Did the print in question really bear this mark, I should satisfy myself with suggesting that it might possibly be the mark of the proprietor and publisher of these plates, and not that of the engraver: for the circumstance of two sets of the planets having been executed by the same artist, perhaps within a very few years, seems to justify the supposition, that he was not the publisher of his own plates, but that he engraved many of them, at least, for others. Fortunately, however, I have had the opportunity of making inquiries concerning this matter, the result of which renders such an hypothesis wholly unnecessary. Mr. Cumberland, to whose pen the world is indebted for the catalogue of *Bonasoni's* engravings, possesses a set of the *Giuoco di Tarocchi,* of the edition now spoken of, complete, except one. In answer to my queries, he informs me, that no such mark

Bartsch and Zani, as has been already observed, mention two sets of the Giuoco di Tarocchi, the one as the copy of the other, although they are at variance as to which is the original. The fact appears to be, that many of the pieces of the one series are rather the repetitions of the same subjects, engraved with variations in the designs of the figures, than what may be properly called copies. The same personages, accompanied by the like symbolic distinctions, were to be represented in each; but, in other respects, the artist does not appear to have been expected, like the card-makers of the present day, to be the servile copyist of what was done before. It is, indeed, probable, that great part of the figures, in both the sets about to be described, were copied, with variations and improvements, from more ancient cards engraved in wood.

Bartsch has given separate catalogues of the two sets of the Giuoco di Tarocchi above-mentioned, but does not appear to have seen an entire set of either. It is my lot only to be acquainted with a part of the set which Zani and I consider the originals; these, in the following catalogue, are placed first, and are followed by the corresponding pieces of the other set, distinguished by the letter (*a*). These last stand first in Mr. Bartsch's catalogue, to which I have had recourse for the description of some of those pieces which I have not seen. It remains to be observed that, in both sets, each piece has its title in Roman capitals, underneath, followed by its number in Roman numerals: the number is repeated, in Arabic figures, on the right hand corner, and, on the left, is the letter distinguishing the class to which it belongs. The pieces of the two sets differ a little in size: those which we consider the originals, measure seven inches in height, including the margin with the inscription, by

is to be found on the POESIA, xxvii. 27, which is marked with the proper distinguishing letter of the class only, C: but that in the print representing GEOMETRIA, xxiiii. 24. the engraver appears originally to have engraved a wrong distinguishing letter; viz. an E instead of a C, (which latter is the proper letter distinguishing the class,) and afterwards to have corrected his error by engraving a C over it, without erasing the former letter; so that this piece appears marked thus: Ɛ

four inches in width; the others, which Bartsch considers the most ancient, are somewhat smaller, measuring only six inches and three quarters, by three inches and three quarters.

Il Giuoco di Tarocchi.

Class I. The ten pieces of this class represent different states and conditions of men: in the set which we consider the most ancient, they are marked E: the corresponding pieces of the other set (*a*) are marked S.

E. Misero. I. 1. ..... (*a*). S. A poor man, almost naked, resting on his stick. He is turned towards the right.

E. Fameio. II. 2. A servant, carrying a dish with a cover, as if to an entertainment. He is dressed in a short habit, which reaches to the middle of the thigh only, and has a large napkin hung over his arms and his left shoulder. His head is uncovered, and his steps are directed towards the left.

(*a*). S. According to Bartsch's description, the corresponding piece of this set is in a reverse direction: the servant is walking towards the right.

E. Artixan. III. 3. A goldsmith, in his shop, seated at his work, on the right of the print. On the table before him, are a hammer, compasses, and other tools. Opposite to him is a forge, with a pair of bellows; and, behind him, is a boy looking over his shoulder.

(*a*). S. The goldsmith, in this print, is seated on the left; and, according to Bartsch, the other objects in the piece are disposed differently.

E. Merchadante. IIII. 4. The merchant is dressed in a loose gown, with large sleeves, and a girdle; and wears a cap made

of cloth, the folds of which hang down on one side to his girdle, and over his right shoulder. He is reading a letter, which he holds with both hands, his figure being turned towards the left.

(*a*). S. This piece, according to Bartsch, is numbered thus:—IV. 4. The figure appears to be in a reverse direction, being turned towards the right.

Trifling as the observation may appear, I will here remark, that the appearance of the Roman numerals on this piece (IV.), and on No. IX. of this series, is amongst the arguments which I consider in favour of the priority of the other set, where the same pieces are numbered in the more ancient manner—IIII. VIIII.

E. ZINTILOMO. V. 5. The gentleman is dressed in a jacket, folded in stiff perpendicular plaits, with a double border, reaching half way down the thigh. He is walking towards the right, having a falcon in his left-hand, and the thumb of his right-hand thrust into his belt. Behind him is a lad with a brace of small hounds.

(*a*). S. In this piece, according to Bartsch, the gentleman has a stick in his right-hand. As in the other, he holds a falcon with his left-hand, and is walking towards the right.

E. CHAVALIER. VI. 6. ..... (*a*). S. The cavalier has a dagger, which he grasps with both hands. He is attended by a page, who bears his sword, and is introduced in the back-ground on the right.

E. DOXE. VII. 7. The Doge of Venice, standing, dressed in his usual habit. He is turned towards the left.

(*a*). S. The Doge of Venice, walking towards the right.

E. RE. VIII. 8. A king, seated on his throne, holding a sceptre in his right-hand, with his other hand resting upon his haunch. He wears a crown, and is seen quite in front; his knees are asunder, and his feet are drawn back. The design of this figure is

·F· ·IMPERATOR·VIIII· ·9·

entirely different from that in the corresponding piece of the other series.

(*a*). S. A king, seated on his throne, with a sceptre in his right-hand. He is seen in a three-quarter point of view, and is a little turned towards the left. His left foot is somewhat extended forwards.

E. IMPERATOR. VIIII. 9. An emperor, seated on his throne, holding a globe in his right-hand, and having the thumb of his left-hand thrust into his belt. At his feet is an eagle.

The reader will find this piece correctly copied in the annexed plate.*

(*a*). S. Numbered thus :—IX. 9. An emperor, seated upon his throne, holding a globe in his left-hand, and, in his right, a sceptre. At his feet is an eagle.

E. PAPA. X. 10. The Roman Pontiff seated, holding the keys in his right-hand, and resting his left on a large book. He is seen in front. The print will be found copied in Mr. Singer's work upon playing-cards, from the original in my own collection.

(*a*). S. This piece appears, according to Bartsch, to differ from the corresponding piece of the other series: the ears are exposed, which, in the other, are covered with the hair.

Class 2. Marked in both the sets with the letter D. The figures of this class represent Apollo and the nine Muses.

D. CALIOPE. XI. 11. She is seen in front, and appears walking

* It is proper, however, in this place, to observe, that the original impression itself, is far from giving a just idea of the skill of the ancient artist by whom this series of engravings was executed, having been evidently taken off after the plate was much worn, and perhaps, also, retouched; and the same observation, I am sorry to say, will apply to the original impression of another piece of the series, No. 39, of which the reader will also be presented with a copy. Both are in my own collection.

forwards—her right leg uncovered. She blows a long trumpet, the end of it downwards, and has a globe at her feet. In the back-ground, on the right, is a fountain, the stream of which issues from a rock, and falls into a basin of ornamental sculpture.

(*a*). In this piece, the fountain in the back-ground appears, from Bartsch's description, to be on the left-hand. He makes no mention of the globe at the Muse's feet.

D. URANIA. XII. 12. An easy, graceful figure. She has a pair of compasses in her right-hand, and, in her left, which is elevated, a globe. Her right leg is uncovered; her body is a little turned towards the right, and her head towards the left.

(*a*). In this piece, Urania holds the compasses with her left-hand, and the globe with her right.

D. TERPSICORE. XIII. 13. She is seen in front, and holds, with her left-hand, a small guitar, which she plays on with her right. She has very long hair, part of which is seen on the left. The back-ground represents a large river, and at her feet, behind her, is a globe.

(*a*). The name in this piece, according to Bartsch, is spelt *Tersicore*, and the figure is quite different. She is playing on the guitar, her body being turned a little towards the right, and her head towards the left. On the right, at her feet, is a globe.

D. ERATO. XIIII. 14. She is playing on the tambarine, and walking towards the right.

(*a*). There appears, according to Bartsch, to be a small difference between this piece and the corresponding print of the other series. In the piece above described, he informs us that the tambarine, which the muse plays upon, touches the border of the engraving on the right; whereas, in this, there is an interval of about a quarter of an inch between the tambarine and the border.

D. POLIMNIA. XV. 15. . . . . (*a*). She is playing on a sort of lyre. Her head is turned towards the right of the print.

D. TALIA. XVI. 16. . . . . (*a*). She is playing upon a small violin, and kneeling with her left knee on the ground.

D. MELPOMENE. XVII. 17. The lower part of her figure is seen in front, but her face and the upper part of her body are turned towards the left. She blows a horn, and at her feet, on the left, is a globe.

(*a*). Melpomene blowing a horn, her figure being directed towards the right.

D. EUTERPE. XVIII. 18. The Muse is playing upon a double pipe; her back resting against a tree. Her figure is turned towards the left of the print, and at her feet is a globe.

(*a*). According to Bartsch this piece is in a reverse direction. Her figure is turned towards the right.

D. CLIO. XVIIII. 19. She is standing on a swan, which is swimming in the water. Her body is turned a little towards the right of the print, but she looks towards the left, and has her right hand elevated in an action expressive of admiration. With her left hand she holds up her drapery, which is much in the taste of ancient sculpture, and extremely elegant. Part of her long hair, which reaches to her legs, is seen behind her figure on either side. The whole is very graceful.

(*a*). From Bartsch's description, it appears that the figure in this piece is reversed.—The Muse holds up her drapery with the right hand.

D. APOLLO. XX. 20. He is seated upon a throne formed of two swans placed back to back: his feet rest on a celestial globe. His right leg is uncovered, and he has a wand in his right hand.

(*a*). In this piece, according to Bartsch, the left leg of Apollo, and not the right, is uncovered. Bartsch also mentions a branch of laurel, which Apollo holds in the left hand.

Class 3. The ten pieces of this Class represent the liberal arts, and some of the sciences. They are marked, in both sets, with the letter C.

C. GRAMMATICA. XXI. 21. Grammar is represented under the semblance of an old woman with a hood; she is turned towards the right, and has a file in the right hand, and a vase in the left.

(*a*). The principal difference between this piece and the above, appears to be, according to Bartsch, (tom. xiii. p. 134) that the vase is held in the right hand and the file in the left. The German writer, however, appears, in this place, to contradict what he advanced in p. 125, where he says, expressly, "*tenant un vase de la main gauche, et de l'autre une férule.*" The title under this piece appears to be spelt with one m only; thus: Gramatica.

C. LOICA. XXII. 22. She is turned towards the right of the print, her face in profile. She has a dragon, covered by a veil, in her left hand, at which she is looking. Her right hand is in an attitude expressive of admiration.

(*a*). In this piece, according to Bartsch, the figure of Loica holds the dragon in the right hand instead of the left.

C. RHETORICA. XXIII. 23. Rhetoric is represented by a female figure of dignified and commanding deportment, with a helmet, surmounted by a regal crown, on her head, and a naked sword in her right hand. She is seen in front, and on each side of her is a small infant, or genius, with wings, blowing a trumpet. That on the right of the print has the trumpet elevated. This piece will be found, copied from the original in my collection, in Mr. Singer's work upon playing-cards.

(*a*). In this piece, according to Bartsch, the genius on the left has its trumpet elevated, instead of that on the right. The design is probably, also different in some other respects.

E. GEOMETRIA. XXIIII. 24. . . . . (*a*). A female figure hovering in the clouds, and employed in tracing geometrical figures. She is turned towards the right. Underneath is a landscape.

C. ARITMETRICHA. XXV. 25. A graceful female, seen in front; her head a little inclined towards the left. A girdle encircles her waist; and her head, from which issue rays of light, is covered with a veil that descends on her breast, and flows back over her shoulders. She looks downwards, and is counting money from one hand into the other.

(*a*). The figure, according to Bartsch, is much the same; but the hands are employed differently. The left hand holds a tablet, on which are the figures from 1 to 10—as well as the number 14085.

C. MUSICHA. XXVI. 26. A female in a loose robe, her arms naked from the shoulders, sitting on a semicircular chair or bench without a back. She is playing on a pipe or flute, which she stops with some of the fingers of both hands. On the left of the print is a swan, standing; and, on the ground, scattered in various directions, are a small portable organ or regals, a lute, a harp, a pipe, and a kind of violin with two strings, and a bow belonging to it; the latter instrument leaning against the bottom of the chair on the right-hand. The head of the female is uncovered, and her hair curled up in front. She looks down, towards the left, on the swan; but the lower half of her body is turned towards the right.

(*a*). She is seated, says Bartsch, playing on a flute, and is turned towards the right. She has a swan near her, and is surrounded by musical instruments scattered on the ground.

C. POESIA. XXVII. 27. She is seated near a fountain, and is playing on a pipe or flute which she holds in her right hand. In her left hand is a vase.

(*a*). The figure, according to Bartsch, is in a reverse direction. She holds the pipe in the left hand and the vase in the right. The shape of the fountain is different.

C. PHILOSOFIA. XXVIII. 28. She holds a lance in her right hand, and a shield, on which is the Gorgon's head, in her left.

(*a*). The figure, generally, according to Bartsch, is in a reverse direction. She holds the lance, however, in her right hand, and the shield in her left.

C. ASTROLOGIA. XXVIIII. 29. A graceful female figure, with wings to her shoulders, beautifully draped. She is turned towards the right, and her face is seen in profile. She has a crown of stars, and appears to be contemplating a circle filled with stars, which is placed opposite to her in the sky. In her left-hand is a book, and, in her right, a wand, the point of which is directed downwards.

(*a*). The figure, according to Bartsch, is in a reverse direction; and the wings, which, in the print above described, are extended upwards, have their points downwards. The wand also is in a different position, being held with its point upwards.

C. THEOLOGIA. XXX. 30. ..... (*a*). Theology is represented by a female figure, with two faces, like the god Janus. One of these faces is that of a woman, and looks towards the right; the other face is that of a man, and is turned in the opposite direction. The upper part only of the figure is seen; the lower extremities being hid by a large globe covered with stars.

Class 4. The ten pieces of this class represent astronomy, chronology, cosmogony, and the seven cardinal virtues.* They are marked with the letter B.

B. Iliaco. XXXI. 31. Astronomy† is represented by a winged genius, holding the sun in his right-hand.

(*a*). The figure is in a reversed direction. The genius holds the sun in his left-hand.

B. Chronico. XXXII. 32. Chronology is represented by a winged genius, holding a dragon with its tail in its mouth, the emblem of eternity, in his right-hand. His left-hand rests upon his haunch. The figure is turned towards the left.

(*a*). The figure, according to Bartsch, is in a reversed direction, and holds the serpent in the left-hand.

B. Cosmico. XXXIII. 33. Cosmology is represented under the figure of a winged genius, holding, in his right hand, a globe, half terrestrial and half celestial. His left hand is extended towards the spectator.

(*a*). The genius holds the globe with the left hand, and rests the right upon his haunch.

B. Temperancia. XXXIIII. 34. An elegantly draped female, pouring liquid from one vase into another. She is attended by a

* The circumstance of three of the sciences being united in this class with the seven cardinal virtues, so as to make together ten pieces, furnishes, I think, a satisfactory proof, that these prints must have been intended, according to the assertion of the Italian writers, to be used as cards; since, if they had been published merely as sets of the *Planets*, the *Virtues*, the *Sciences*, &c. as Strutt supposed, we should find them arranged, at least in the two former instances, in classes of seven pieces each.

† I am ignorant of the authority upon which Mr. Bartsch translates the term *Iliaco* by the word *Astronomie*.

little animal resembling a pig, which is looking at itself in a mirror placed on the ground, on the left of the print.

(*a*). According to Bartsch, this piece is in a reverse direction from the above.

B. PRUDENCIA. XXXV. 35. Prudence is represented under the figure of a woman with two faces, viz. that of a female, and that of an old man with a beard. With the female face, which is turned towards the right, she is looking at herself in a mirror held by her in her left hand. In her right-hand she has a pair of compasses. At her feet, on the right, is a cockatrice or dragon.

(*a*). Reverse of the above.

B. FORTEZA. XXXVI. 36. Fortitude. She has her head covered with the skin of a lion, and has a sceptre in her right hand, whilst, with her left, she is breaking a column. At her feet, on the left of the print, is a lion.

(*a*). In this piece, according to Bartsch, the head of Fortitude is covered by a helmet, and the lion at her feet, is on the right. She holds the sceptre, however, with the right hand.

B. JUSTICIA. XXXVII. 37. She is seen in front, and has a pair of scales in her left hand, and, in her right, a sword. At her feet is a crane.

(*a*). The principal difference between this piece and the above is, according to Bartsch, in the head of the female, which is seen in a three-quarter view, and turned towards the right.

B. CHARITA. XXXVIII. 38. A standing female, in an easy dress, with a girdle. Over this dress is a long flowing robe, fastened on the breast, with a gem fibula. The head is uncovered, and the hair, separated in the middle, hangs over her shoulders. In her right hand, the arm of which lifts up part of the loose outer robe,

B SPERANZA·XXXVIIII· 39

she holds an inverted purse, from which several pieces of money are dropping; whilst, with her left, she pulls aside her drapery, and exposes her bosom, from whence issues a flame of fire. At the bottom of the print, on the left hand, is a pelican nourishing her young. The figure of Charity fronts the spectator; but her face, which looks downwards on the pelican, is turned towards the left.

(*a*). She holds the purse in the right hand, as in the piece above described, but the pelican beneath is on the right.

B. SPERANZA. XXXVIIII. 39. A dignified and graceful female, standing, with her eyes looking towards heaven, and her hands raised in an attitude expressive of prayer. The figure is turned towards the left; on which side of the print, on the ground, is a phœnix standing in the midst of the flames. This piece is carefully copied in the annexed engraving.

(*a*). Reverse of the above described.

B. FEDE. XXXX. 40. A female figure seen in front. Her eyes are directed towards a chalice with the host upon it, which she holds elevated in her right hand. In her left hand is a cross, and at her feet, on the right of the print, is a little dog.

(*a*). The figure, says Mr. Bartsch, is reversed, but still the cross is held in the left hand, and the chalice in the right.

Class 5. The ten pieces of this class, represent the planets, &c. They are marked, in both the sets, with the distinguishing letter A.

A. LUNA. XXXXI. 41. Diana, in her car, drawn by two horses. Their course is directed towards the left.

(*a*). The car moves in a reverse direction.

A. MERCURIO. XXXXII. 42. Mercury is represented playing on a flute, which he holds in his left hand: in his right hand is the caduceus. A cock, and the head of a man, are at his feet.

(*a*). The figure, says Bartsch, is reversed; but, nevertheless, Mercury holds the caduceus in his right hand, and the flute in his left.

A. VENUS. XXXXIII. 43. The goddess is bathing herself in a rivulet, on the banks of which are three nymphs, and a Cupid; the former on the right hand, the latter on the left.

(*a*). The composition in this piece, according to Bartsch, is reversed; the nymphs being placed on the left hand, and the Cupid on the right.

A. SOL. XXXXIIII. 44. Phaeton falling from the chariot of the sun, the course of which is directed towards the right.

(*a*). Reverse of the above described.

A. MARTE. XXXXV. 45. Mars seated on his throne, with a sword in his right hand. At his feet is a dog.

(*a*). The design of this piece, says Bartsch, is much the same as the above described; except that the helmet of Mars, in this piece, is decorated by wings, which is not the case in the other.

A. JUPITER. XXXXVI. 46. Jupiter, seated in an oval, with a dart or javelin in his right hand, which he is about to throw at a little figure sitting beneath. At the top of the piece is the eagle.

(*a*). The head of the eagle at the top of the print, according to Bartsch, is turned towards the left; whereas, in the above described, it is turned towards the right. The design, in other respects, is, he says, much the same.

A. Saturno. XXXXVII. 47. Saturn, holding, in his right hand, one of his children, which he is about to devour.

(*a*). Reverse of the above described.

A. Octava Spera. XXXXVIII. 48. A winged female, beautifully draped, supporting, with both hands elevated, a large circle filled with stars. Her figure is turned towards the left of the print, and her left leg is uncovered.

(*a*). Reverse of the above. The figure is turned towards the right.

A. Primo Mobile. XXXXVIIII. 49. A winged female figure, with beautiful drapery, and full of spirit. She appears as if about to spring from the globe of the earth, which she touches only with her left foot. She supports a large globe with both her hands, and is seen in profile; her figure being directed towards the left.

(*a*). Reverse. The figure is turned towards the right.

A. Prima Causa. XXXXX. 50. The globe of the earth surrounded by seven circles representing the seven planets.

(*a*). There appears, from Mr. Bartsch's description of this print, to be a considerable variation between it and the above described; viz. that, in addition to the circles, the symbols of the four Evangelists are introduced at the four corners of the piece.

Perhaps the series of twenty-four prints of the Prophets which follows, would have been more properly placed immediately after the two prints of the Planets in the collection of Mr. Douce and Mr. Lloyd, which they strictly resemble, as well in their style of execution, as in the forms of the characters and the rudeness of the orthography in the inscriptions underneath them. Three of these pieces are in the collection of the British Museum; besides two other pieces, representing Joseph and the Madonna, which, without doubt, originally accompanied the series. I shall arrange these

prophets according to Bartsch, who has given a list of the whole, but I shall be more minute than he has been in the description of the few that I have seen.

THE PROPHETS.

"These Prophets," says the above-mentioned writer,* "are repre-
"sented sitting in different attitudes; some of them upon thrones;
"others upon clouds, from which issue flames of fire in a horizontal
"direction on either side. The name of each prophet is engraved
"in the upper part of the plate; some of them have also a scroll
"with an inscription; and, in the margin, at the bottom of each,
"are eight Italian verses." I shall briefly remark, in addition to the observations of Bartsch, that, in the pieces at the British Museum, all the inscriptions are in capitals, and that the letter S appears always reversed.

Each piece measures, including the bottom margin with the verses, seven inches in height, by four inches and one-eighth in breadth.

1. NOE PROFETA. The first verse underneath, begins: *Il verbo etterno e certo,* &c.

2. JACHOB. An inscription upon it: *Ad predam descendisti,* &c. The first verse underneath, begins: *O sole nascente sanza fine,* &c.

3. MUISE PROFETA. Inscription: *Non adorabis deos,* &c. First verse: *O chiave di Davit,* &c.

4. ARON PROFETA. First verse: *Dise el padre signore,* &c.

5. SAMUEL PROFETA. First verse: *O calor santo della luce,* &c.

6. DAVIT PROFETA. Inscription: *Laldate pueri Dominus,* &c. First verse: *A voi presenti dove,* &c.

* "Peintre Graveur," vol. xiii. p. 164.

7. SALOMON.* First verse: *Lardente mente del divino,* &c.

8. HELIA PROFETA. First verse: *Io vengho certamente,* &c.

9. ELIXEO PROFETA. First verse: *Per Yhv fie ogni dubbio rimosso,* &c.

10. JEREMIA PROFETA. First verse: *Per vero a me si fu,* &c.

11. BARUCH PROFETA. (The b in the name of Baruch a minuscule, the other letters capitals). An impression of this piece, which does not appear to have been seen by Bartsch, is in the British Museum. The prophet is seated upon a cloud of an oblong shape, placed horizontally, from which proceed rays of glory, and is turned a little towards the right. His feet are supported by another cloud of the same form. In his right hand he holds a book, which is closed, and fastened with two clasps; and in his left is a large scroll. This scroll rises, and traverses the print behind his head; and on it is inscribed his title; the word BARUCH being on one side of his head, and PROFETA on the other. The head of the prophet is by no means devoid of character, and has a handsome beard and long hair. He wears a cap, with a broad border turned up all round, and a pointed crown, surmounted by a small ball or button. The two first verses of the inscription beneath, not indeed very intelligible, are as follows:

IVIDIILSENGNIO CHENELLORIENTE
CIDIMOSTRO LOGRAN GOCONDITADE.

12. EZECHIEL PROFETA. Inscription: *Exaltavit lignum humiliter.*†

13. DANIELO PROFETA. Inscription: *Post edomodas VII et LXII occidetu* XPS. First verse: *Vendendo la notte,* &c.

14. JOEL PROFETA. This piece is also in the British Museum. The prophet is seated, and has his feet resting on clouds exactly

* Mr. Bartsch observes that, in the only impression he had seen of this piece, the scroll intended for the name was vacant; and that he is ignorant whether or not the same may be found to be the case with other impressions of it.

† Bartsch has omitted to notice the verses under this piece.

like those in the print of Baruch above described, and is a little turned towards the right. His right hand rests upon a book, which is closed, and lying on his lap, and with his left he holds a large scroll, like that of Baruch, on which is his title. He wears a linen cap, and over it, another cap, which is turned up all round, and has a pointed crown. He has a beard, and his hair is rather long than otherwise. His countenance is full of character. The two first verses underneath are as follow:

FATE EXULTAZIONE ATUTTI VOI
E QUALI DISIDERATE LAGUSTIA.

15. AMOS PROFETA. First verse: *O principio divino,* &c.
16. ABIAS PROFETA. First verse: *Pongiv o popolo ebreo,* &c.
17. GIONA PROFETA. First verse: *Predichar femmi lonperio,* &c.
18. NAV (Nahum) PROFETA. First verse: *O pontefice sommo,* &c.
19. ABACHUCH PROFETA. First verse: *Prenda chi vol diletto,* &c.
20. AGEO PROFETA. An impression of this piece is also in the British Museum. The prophet is sitting on, and supported by clouds, like Baruch and Joel; but his figure, which is nearly seen in front, is a little inclined towards the left. On his lap is a book, in which he is reading: he holds it open with his right hand, and, with his left hand, part of which only is seen, he appears to be pointing to that part of the page which employs his immediate attention. He has a beard and long hair, and wears a turban, surmounted by a high crown or tiara, with a small pine-apple at top. A veil proceeds from underneath the turban, the two ends of which float in the air on either side his shoulders. The title AGEO PROFETA is introduced in the upper part of the print, on the left, but is not on a scroll. The head of this prophet, like the others, has considerable merit. The verses at bottom begin:

ECIELI SON GRANDI ESIL LOR MALTURA
ECREDO PARTORIRA PRESTAMENTE.

21. XACCHERIA PROFETA. First verse: *Chostui sara quella,* &c.
22. MALACCHIA PROFETA. First verse: *Echo che vien di tutti,* &c.
23. JESUE PROFETA. First verse: *O re de re o signor,* &c.
24. ISAIA PROFETA. First verse: *Eccho la vergin,* &c.

I have no doubt whatever that the two following pieces which, as has been said, are in the collection of the British Museum, belong to the above series; and that they were placed, very properly, at the end, as descriptive of the completion of the ancient prophecies in the birth of Christ. When bound in a volume, and placed opposite each other, these two pieces would constitute, as it were, one composition.

The first piece, which, under the above supposition, was intended to be placed on the left-hand, represents the Madonna, who is kneeling on the ground, and turned towards the right. She has a glory of an oval form over her head; and before her, on the ground, is the divine infant, who has a circular diadem, or glory, round his head, and is moreover entirely surrounded by rays, or flames, which appear to descend upon him from a star, placed immediately over him in the sky. Behind the infant, on the right, are seen the ox and the ass; and on the left, behind the virgin, is part of the hovel rising up to the top of the print. There is no inscription or title at the upper part of this piece; but there are eight verses, as in the prints of the prophets, at bottom. The two first are as follow:—

AVE FIDELE ISCHORTA DE MORTALI
PELSANTOPARTO DIGESU TUO FIGLIO.

The other represents Joseph, and bears, on a scroll at top, this title: JUSEPPO. Joseph is seated on the ground, and is turned towards the left. He extends his right-hand, as if he were pointing out the infant to the shepherds, although none appear, and, with his left-hand, holds his mantle over his bosom. On the left of the

piece is the ass's pack-saddle. The verses underneath, addressed to the virgin, plainly shew that this print was intended, as I have supposed, to be united, or at least to be placed opposite to its companion, so as to form one subject. The two first are thus:—

AVE VIRGO FIGLIOLA DISANTANNA
DELNOSTRO VERO IDIO MADRE EFIGLIUOLA.

I will only add, though I do not take upon me to assert it, that I think it very probable that the above series was engraved after designs made by Botticelli, at an early period of his life—probably not later than between 1460 and 1470—and that from the incorrectness of drawing in the hands of most of the figures, the only naked parts, except the faces, that are seen, there appears to be every fair ground for placing them amongst the first productions of Baldini. That they are by the same engraver who engraved the planets, so often mentioned, is, I think, unquestionable.

According to Bartsch, the inscriptions under these pieces, after the plates had furnished a certain number of impressions, were cut off; by which the plates were reduced to five inches and a half in height. These *second* impressions are numbered from 1 to 24, on the right-hand corner, at top; and there are also, he tells us, one or two other small alterations in some of the pieces; as on No. 3, where the words *Muise profeta* are effaced, and *Moise propheta* engraved higher in the plate in their stead. At length, according to Bartsch, the plates underwent a further change; and in these *third* impressions the pieces are ranged in a different order, and numbered on the right-hand at bottom.

Besides the above series of the prophets, Mr. Bartsch also notices a set of twelve pieces, representing the *Sibyls;* which, as there appears, from his account of them, to be every reason to believe, not only that they appertain to the same engraver, but also that they were a sort of sequel to the same work, are here enumerated.

THE SIBYLS.

These pieces, according to Bartsch, are as nearly as possible, of the same dimensions as those of the Prophets; and, in like manner, each has eight Latin verses underneath. The Sibyls are represented seated, and their names are engraved in the upper part of the plates; sometimes on scrolls. Besides the verses underneath, they also bear other inscriptions. The pieces are numbered from 1 to 12—on the left-hand corner, at top.

1. SIBILLA PERSICHA. She is seated on a bank, and turned towards the left. She has a book, open, in her left-hand, and has her right elevated. Inscrip. *Ecce filius dei,* &c. First verse at bottom: *Eccho perchvi la bestia,* &c.

2. SIBILLA LIBICA. She is seated on a bank, and turned towards the left, having a book in her right-hand, the leaves of which she is turning over with her left. Inscrip. *Ecce veniet,* &c. First verse: *Il di verra chelletterno,* &c.

3. SIBILLA DELFICHA. She appears seated on a piece of land surrounded by the sea, and is turned towards the right. She supports a scroll with both her hands, on which is her title—SIBILLA DELFICHA; and has also, in her right-hand, a large horn or trumpet. Inscrip. *Nascetur propheta e virgine,* &c. First verse: *None daeser lenta,* &c.

4. SIBILLA CHIMICHA. She is sitting on a seat surrounded with flames or rays, and is turned towards the right. She is reading in a book which she holds with both hands. Inscrip. *In pueritia sua,* &c. First verse: *Una vergine santa,* &c.

5. SIBILLA ERITEA. She sits on a seat surrounded by rays or flames, and placed in a circle. With her right-hand, she holds a

naked sabre, and, with her left, a scroll, on which is inscribed—*Morte morietur et tribus,* &c. First verse, underneath: *Risguardo iddio dello,* &c.

6. The Sibyl of the Hellespont. Mr. Bartsch does not appear to have had an opportunity of seeing either this piece, or No. 8.

7. SIBILLA CUMANA. The seat on which she is placed is surrounded by flames or rays, and she is turned towards the right. She has a book in her left-hand, in which is written—*Jam redit et Virgo,* &c. First verse: *Lultimo mie parlar,* &c.

8. The Sibyl of Samos.

9. SIBILLA FRIGIA. She sits on a seat surrounded by flames, and is turned towards the right. In her left-hand she holds a scroll, on which is inscribed—*Veniet de super filius,* &c. First verse: *Vidi leccelso idio,* &c.

10. SIBILLA TIBURTINA. She is seated on a rocky bank, and is turned towards the right. She has a book on her knees, the leaves of which she appears to be turning over with her right-hand. Upon a long scroll is an inscription, commencing—*Nascetur in Bettelem,* &c. First verse below: *Il gusto ddio,* &c.

11. SIBILLA EUROPA. She is seated on a bank, and turned towards the left; and is reading in a book, which she holds with both her hands. Inscrip. *Veniet collet et montes,* &c. First verse below: *Verra quel vebrbo,* &c.

12. SIBILLA AGRIPPA. She is seated on a throne, and holds a book with her right-hand, at which she is pointing with her left, and wherein is an inscription, commencing thus: *Hoc verbum invisibile,* &c. First verse beneath: *Qundo sa questo,* &c.

I shall close this list of the supposed works of Baccio Baldini, with the following beautiful little print, which is engraved exactly in the same manner as the set of pieces of the "Giuoco di Tarocchi," before described, and is preserved in the valuable cabinet of Mr. Lloyd; by whom it was purchased out of the collection formerly appertaining to the Riccardi family* at Florence. It is evidently a first impression of the plate, and, as far as I am able to learn, is unique. The subject is the DEATH OF ORPHEUS.

Orpheus is represented upon the ground, in the centre of the piece, resting on his right hand and right knee. His left hand, with which he holds a part of his mantle, is raised to his head, as if for its protection: he is looking up towards the right, and seems imploring the pity of one of the two nymphs who are beating him to death with long clubs. The nymph on this side is seen in a back view; the other, on the left, is seen in a front. Both these figures are covered by beautiful drapery. The figure of Orpheus, except the mantle on his shoulders, is naked. A little to the left of the nymph which is seen in a front view, a child appears running away terrified; and, immediately behind the child, a tree, supported by a single perpendicular stem, rises to the top of the print. Behind the group of Orpheus and the two nymphs, is a rocky mount, perpendicular on the right, and surmounted by a walled city with a high tower. The lyre, or rather the guitar of Orpheus, is lying before him on the ground.

This little print is shaded with cross hatchings in various directions, like the pieces already described. The whole is designed with much elegance, and finished throughout with the greatest delicacy. Being, moreover, perfectly well printed, and in excel-

* The Riccardi collection of prints and drawings, together with several pictures, was purchased a few years ago by an English gentleman at Florence; and, afterwards, sold by auction at Stuart's Rooms in Piccadilly. It was far from being, upon the whole, a fine collection; but it contained a few very interesting engravings of the early Florentine school; the best of which now grace the cabinet of the friend mentioned in the text.

lent preservation, it may justly be termed a most interesting specimen of the artist's talents. I shall leave it to the research of future writers, to explain the engraver's meaning in the scroll, or flourish, which is introduced over the figure of Orpheus, and is here faithfully copied :

This print measures eight inches and a quarter in width, by five inches and a half in height.

ALESSANDRO, OR SANDRO, FILIPEPI, COMMONLY CALLED SANDRO BOTTICELLI.

Nat. 1437. *Ob.* 1515.

As many doubts have been suggested by recent writers relative to the engravings of Sandro Botticelli—especially to his prints for the Dante of 1481—and as the account given us by Vasari has been frequently misinterpreted,* I have judged it the safest method to introduce the old Florentine artist to my readers in a careful translation of Vasari's life of him. For, although only a small part of it treats immediately of Botticelli's works of engraving, the remainder, which contains the descriptions of his paintings, may be found not a little interesting to the collector of ancient prints; and may, by giving him a fuller insight into his style of composition than he would otherwise possess, occasionally assist him in forming his decisions concerning the probable authenticity of such pieces as he may find ascribed to him; especially if, in addition to this species of information, he shall have had the opportunity of a previous acquaintance with any of that artist's genuine designs, or of his works of painting.

* *Heineken*, for example, " Dict. des Artistes," tom. iii. p. 209, makes *Baldini* the engraver of the prints in the Dante.—*Bartsch*, " Peintre Graveur," tom. xiii. p. 161. appears doubtful upon this point; but, nevertheless, inserts the pieces ascribed, whether to Botticelli or Baldini, in the same article. *Huber*, " Manuel," &c. tom. iii, p. 38, is positive in ascribing the prints in the Dante to Baldini.

" In the time of the magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici the elder, " which was, in truth, to persons of genius, a golden age, flourished " Alessandro, called, according to our custom, Sandro, and surnamed " Botticelli, for the reasons which will presently appear. This " person was the son of Mariano Filipepi, a Florentine citizen, by " whom he was diligently brought up, and caused to be instructed " in all those things which it is customary to teach young boys " previous to their being put to some trade: nevertheless, although " he learned with great facility every thing to which he applied, " he could never be satisfied with any school of reading, writing, " or accounts; insomuch that his father, tired by his volatility, " and determined to fix his attention to some one object, placed " him with a goldsmith, a friend of his, called Botticello, who had " then the reputation of a skilful professor of that art.

" There was, in those times, a very great degree of fellowship, " and, as it were, a continual intimacy, between the goldsmiths and " the painters; whence Sandro, who was a young man of an acute " mind, and entirely dedicated to the study of design, became " enamoured of painting, and anxiously desired to apply himself to " the practice of it. He therefore freely opened his mind to his " father, who, knowing the ardour of his disposition, conducted " him to Fra Filippo Lippi, of the Carmelites, then a professor of " painting of great reputation, and placed him under his care, that " Sandro, according to his inclination, might learn that art. Having " given himself up, therefore, entirely to the study of painting, he " followed and imitated the style of his master with such assiduity, " that Fra Filippo became much attached to him, and instructed " him with so much care that, in a short time, he attained a degree " of excellence which no one could have imagined possible.

" When yet a lad, he painted ' Nella Mercatantia,' at Florence, " a figure of Fortitude, between the pictures of the Virtues which " Antonio and Pietro del Pollajuolo were then executing. He " painted a picture in the ' Capella de' Bardi,' in the church " of S. Spirito, at Florence, which is executed with great care,

" and extremely well finished; wherein are certain olive and palm-
" trees painted with exquisite delicacy. He painted a picture for
" the church of the Nuns of the 'Convertite,' as also one for the
" monastery of S. Barnabà. In the church of Ogni Santi, he
" painted, in fresco, by the side of the door which leads to the
" choir, a figure of S. Agostino, whereon (being ambitious to sur-
" pass all the painters of that time, but especially Domenico Ghir-
" landaio, who, on the other side, had painted a S. Girolamo) he
" bestowed much pains; which work was deserving of great praise,
" as he had expressed, in the head of the saint, that profound intelli-
" gence and acuteness of intellect, which are proper to persons
" abstracted from worldly thoughts, and continually employed in
" the investigation of sublime or abstruse subjects. This painting,
" as has been stated in the life of Ghirlandajo, was, in this year,
" 1564, removed safe and entire from its original situation. Whence
" having acquired reputation, he was employed by the company of
" 'Porta S. Maria' to paint a picture of the coronation of the Virgin,
" with a choir of angels, for the church of S. Marco; which work
" was correctly designed, and skilfully executed. He painted many
" things in the house of the Medici, for Lorenzo the elder, and
" especially a figure of Minerva, over a device representing gabions
" throwing out flames,* which figure was the size of life; and also
" a S. Sebastian. In the church of S. Maria Maggior, at Florence,
" is a *Pietà* by him, with figures of great beauty and expression, by
" the side of the chapel of the family Panciatichi. For various
" private houses in the city, he painted pictures of a circular form;
" and many with female figures naked: two of which are now at
" Castello, a villa of the Duke Cosimo; the one representing the birth
" of Venus, with the winds, the loves, and the zephyrs; the other,
" Venus adorned with flowers by the Graces, denoting the Spring;

* I have some doubt of the accuracy of my translation in this place. Vasari says: " sù una impresa di *bronconi*, che buttavano fuoco;" and I have conjectured that the word *bronconi* may, amongst its other significations, mean gabions; without which freedom of interpretation I can make no sense of the passage.

" both of them composed and executed with taste. In the house of " Gio. Vespucci, in the ' Via de Servi,' now that of Pietro Salviati, " he painted several pictures round a room, surrounded with carved " ornaments of walnut-tree; in which are many figures of great " spirit and excellence. In like manner he painted, in the house of " the Pucci family, Boccaccio's story of Nastagio degli Honesti, in " four pictures of small figures, full of animation and beauty; and, " in a circle, the adoration of the Magi. He also painted a picture " of the Annunciation in a chapel of the ' Monaci di Castello.' In " the church of San Pietro Maggiore, near the side entrance, he " painted for Matteo Palmieri, a picture with a prodigious number " of figures, representing the Assumption of the Madonna, with the " different zones or partitions of the heavens, according as they are " described, with the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the " Evangelists, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Doctors of the " Church, the Virgins, and the host of Angels; the whole according " to the plan given him by Matteo, who was a man of talent and " learning; which work he executed in a most masterly and " finished manner: and at the foot of it was represented the " portrait of Matteo, on his knees, as also that of his wife. But " notwithstanding that this work is of the greatest beauty, there " were not wanting envious persons and calumniators, who, not " being able to find other fault, asserted that Matteo and Sandro " had introduced into it notable heresies; concerning which accu- " sation, whether it be true or false, I do not pretend to be a judge. " This I know, that the figures which Sandro inserted in it are " worthy of praise, as well as the diligence and skill with which he " expressed the circles of the heavens, and the divisions between " the saints and the angels; as also the fore-shortenings, and the " varied points of view in which the different objects are seen: the " whole being conducted with excellent design.

" About the same time Sandro was employed to paint a small " picture, with figures about three-quarters of a cubit long, which " was placed in S. Maria Novella, between two of the doors of the

" west end of the church: in it was represented the Adoration of " the Magi, with great propriety of expression; especially in the " figure of the first old man, who, kissing the foot of our Lord, " and melting with tenderness, shews most evidently that he has " attained the end for which he undertook his very long journey. " In the person of this king is represented the portrait of old Cosimo " de' Medici; and it is, of all that now exist of him, the truest and " most striking resemblance. The second king represents Giuliano " de' Medici, the father of Pope Clemente VII. He is wrapt in " contemplation, whilst he devoutly bows before the infant, and " offers his present. The third, who is also on his knees, and " appears, whilst worshipping the infant, to return him thanks, and " to acknowledge him to be the true Messiah, is Giovanni, the son " of Cosimo. Nor is it possible to do justice to the skill displayed " by Sandro in the heads in this picture; the diversity of character " by which those of the young and the old men are distinguished, " or the various points of view in which they are represented; " some of them being seen in front, some in profile, others in three- " quarters, or looking down: the whole evincing all that judgment " in the composition, which could be expected from his consum- " mate mastery; Sandro having so well characterized the attend- " ants of each of the three kings, that the servants of the one cannot " be mistaken for those of the others. It is certainly a most ad- " mirable work for colouring, design, and composition; and so " beautifully finished that, even in these days, every artist is asto- " nished at it.* And, indeed, it acquired him so great a reputation, " as well at Florence as in other parts, that Pope Sistus IV., who " had recently built the chapel in the Papal Palace at Rome, and " determined upon ornamenting it with pictures in fresco, appointed " him to the superintendance of that work: upon which occa- " sion, Sandro himself executed the following subjects:—viz. when " Christ is tempted by the Devil;—Moses killing the Egyptian, and

* This picture is now the property of the author.

" when he assists the Daughters of Jethro against the Shepherds " of Midian—also the Sons of Aaron, who, whilst sacrificing, are " destroyed by fire from Heaven—and some of the figures of the " Popes, which are, in the niches, over the Sacred Histories. " Whence having acquired increased fame and reputation amongst " the many artists of Florence and other cities who worked in com- " petition with him, he received from the Pope a considerable sum " of money. This he soon dissipated in his lodgings at Rome, " where, according to his usual custom, he lived without any " thought for the morrow; and, having finished that part of the " work which had been allotted to him, he immediately returned " to Florence.

" Here, being a person fond of novel pursuits, he commented " upon a part of Dante; and designed and engraved the Inferno; " about which work he consumed a great deal of time. This, " preventing his painting, was the occasion of very great disorder " in his affairs. He likewise engraved many other things from " designs which he had made; but in an indifferent manner, because " he had but little skill in the management of the burin; so that " the best print which we see by his hand is the Triumph of the " Faith of Fra Girolamo Savonarola of Ferrara,* of whose sect he

* I think I have given the true meaning of this interesting passage of Vasari, relative to Botticelli's engravings, in the text; nevertheless, for the further satisfaction of the reader, the words of the Aretine writer are here inserted. " Dove per essere persona " sofistica comentò una parte di Dante: e " figurò lo Inferno, e lo mise in stampa, " dietro al quale consumò di molto tempo, " per lo che non lavorando, fù cagione d'in- " finiti disordini alla vita sua. Mise in " stampa ancora molte cose sue di disegni " ch'egli haveva fatti, ma in cattiva maniera, " perche l'intaglio era mal fatto, *onde il* " *meglio che si vegga* DI SUA MANO *è il* " *trionfo della Fede di Fra Girolamo Sa-* " *vonarola da Ferrara,*" &c. In the first edition of Vasari, the passage respecting Botticelli's engravings is shorter; but the sense of it is the same. Indeed it happily furnishes a satisfactory proof, that the interpretation given in the text of the terms " mise in stampa," is according to Vasari's true meaning. For after the sentence relative to the engravings from Dante, which is verbatim the same in all the editions, he says: " *Mise in stampa ancora* il trionfo " della Fede di Fra Girolamo Savonarola da

" was so active a partizan, that it occasioned him to abandon paint-
" ing; and, in consequence, as he had no income to support him,
" caused the greatest embarrassment in his circumstances. For,
" being obstinate in his attachment to that party, and going about
" continually whining, he neglected to attend to his work; and,
" at length, when he was grown old, he found himself so poor, that
" if Lorenzo de' Medici, (for whom, besides many other things, he
" had executed considerable works at the Spedaletto of Volterra,)
" as well as several other respectable friends who admired his
" talents, had not assisted him, he would have been almost starved
" to death. In the church of S. Francesco, outside the gate at
" S. Miniato, there is, by the hand of Sandro, a circular picture of
" the Madonna, with angels of the size of life, which was esteemed
" a most beautiful performance."

Vasari proceeds to relate a couple of anecdotes of Sandro's pleasantry, not worth translating; and a third, which, as it contains a second mention of his Commentary on Dante, is not wholly uninteresting.

" It is recounted of Sandro," says Vasari, " that, for a joke, he
" accused one of his acquaintance, to the vicar, of heresy; and
" that the person having appeared, and demanded the name of his
" accuser, and the nature of the alleged offence, was informed,
" that it was Sandro; and that he had asserted him to hold the
" opinion of the Epicureans, who say, that the soul dies with the
" body. The accused person, therefore, desired that he might be

" Ferrara;" and this piece, he *expressly* tells us, in his second and augmented edition, was engraved by Sandro's own hand. The words, " *mise in stampa ancora* (also) immediately referring, as they do in this place, to the engravings from Dante, appear, therefore, to leave no doubt that Vasari meant to say that those pieces were *also* engraved by Botticelli himself; and not, as some writers have supposed, by Baldini, or others, from his designs. And, in fact, the general tenor of Vasari's account, agrees in this respect; as it would have been light work to Botticelli, who designed with greater facility than almost any artist of his time, to prepare drawings for the Inferno, for other artists to engrave from; and could never have been the occasion of the inconveniences in his affairs which Vasari speaks of.

" brought, face to face with his accuser, before the judge; when, " Sandro having appeared, he thus addressed the tribunal:—' It is " indeed true that I entertain this opinion of the soul of that fellow, " because he is a beast. Besides which, do you not perceive that " he is a heretic—seeing that, although he is so destitute of learn- " ing, that he can scarcely read, he has the assurance to write a " Commentary on Dante,* and takes his revered name in vain?'

" It is said," continues our author, " that Sandro always esteemed " those whom he knew to be studious of the art, and that he gained " a great deal of money; although, from want of care and proper " management, he got rid of it as fast as he made it. At length, " being old and infirm, he was obliged to walk upon crutches; and, " lastly, in the year 1515, he died at the advanced age of seventy- " eight, and was buried in the church of Ognisanti, at Florence.

" In the Guardaroba of the Duke Cosimo, there are, by his hand, " two female heads, in profile, of great beauty; one of which is " said to be the portrait of a lady who was beloved by Giuliano " de' Medici, the brother of Lorenzo; and the other, that of " Madonna Lucretia de' Tornabuoni, the wife of the said Lorenzo. " There is also, by the pencil of Sandro, in the same collection, an " animated figure of Bacchus, drinking out of a barrel which he " holds up to his mouth with both his hands.

" In the Duomo, at Pisa, in the ' Capella dell' Impagliata,' he " commenced a picture of the Assumption, with a glory of angels; " but as the work did not satisfy him, he left it imperfect. In

* I would gladly be informed concerning Sandro's commentary. I have, sometimes, suspected that he might have written, or furnished the materials for, the short account of the early Florentine artists, prefixed to Landino's commentary; and that this was all. But Vasari's second mention of the circumstance in this place, coupled with the account of the accusation of heresy, which he formerly stated to have been brought against Sandro, upon the occasion of the altar-piece painted by him for Matteo Palmieri, leads me to suspect that he might, perhaps, have written some whimsical opinions as to the etiquette and rules of precedence which he imagined proper amongst the different classes of saints and angels in heaven; and that, in these opinions, he had been found (as, I believe, Dante is in some places) at variance with the established doctrines of the church.

" S. Francesco, at Monte Varchi, he painted the picture at the " principal altar; and at the church of the 'Pieve' at Empoli, on " that side where is the St. Sebastian by Rossellino, he painted " two angels. He was among the first that discovered the method " of preparing and executing the decorations on the standards, and " similar things, carried in processions, by letting in the cloths, or " silks, of different colours, in pieces; so that the colours shewed " on both sides the standard, and the work was not so liable to " fade: in which manner he painted the standard of 'Or San " Michele,' filled with beautiful and varied representations of the " Madonna,"* &c.

" Sandro was a most excellent designer, and drew a great deal, " insomuch that, for some time after his death, his designs were " sought after and highly prized by the artists;† and in our book‡ " are several which are executed with great freedom and judg- " ment. In his historical compositions he was copious, and intro- " duced a great number of figures; as may be seen in the frieze " of the Crucifixion which the friars of S. Maria Novella bear in " procession, and which was worked in tapestry after his designs. " Sandro, in fine, merited great praise for all his works of painting,

* I am unable to understand clearly the meaning of the author in the two lines which complete this sentence, and have, therefore, omitted them.

† A stronger testimony to the merits of Botticelli, than that the artists of Florence should have coveted to possess his drawings, even some years after the greatest painters and sculptors of the sixteenth century had made their appearance, can scarcely be conceived. That the fact, however, was as Vasari has stated, I can readily believe; having, amongst other drawings by him in my own collection, two studies of heads from nature, drawn on a tinted paper with a silver point, and touched in the lights with white, which would do no discredit to the hand of Raffaello, or da Vinci.

‡ That is, the large volume in which Vasari had collected together the original designs of all the greatest artists of Italy, from the revival of painting by Cimabue to his own time. The drawings contained in this collection (which, perhaps, consisted of more than one volume) appear to have been dispersed about a century ago. The Duke of Devonshire's cabinet possesses some of them; and a few others, especially a sheet of studies by Cimabue, which was, probably, the first leaf of the collection, are in my own.

" and especially for those which he executed in his more delicate " and finished manner; as was the case with the picture of the " 'Adoration of the Magi' at Santa Maria Novella, before-mentioned, " which is really an astonishing performance. There is also great " beauty in a little circular picture by his hand, with small figures, " which is preserved in the apartment of the superior of the convent " 'degli Angeli,' at Florence. Lastly, M. Fabio Segni, a gentle- " man of Florence, possesses, by the hand of Sandro, a picture of " the same dimensions as the said 'Adoration of the Magi,' of the " greatest possible beauty; in which is represented 'the Calumny " of Apelles.' This picture was presented by the painter himself " to Antonio Segni, his intimate friend, and under it we now read " the following lines, which were written by the above-named " M. Fabio.*

" Indicio quemquam ne falso lædere tentent,
" Terrarum Reges parva Tabella monet.
" Huic similem Aegypti Regi donavit Apelles.
" Rex fuit, et dignus munere: munus eo."

Here ends Vasari's Life of Sandro Botticelli.

The testimony of Vasari, in the above account, appears too decisive as to the fact of Botticelli's having engraved many pieces from his own designs, and, amongst the rest, certain plates from the Inferno of Dante, to admit of any reasonable doubt concerning it; or, at least, of such having been the common belief when Vasari wrote: (unless, indeed, it be urged, that Vasari's expression, as to his having engraved the Inferno of Dante, may refer only to a single plate, not now known:) and as several engravings from passages of the Inferno are found in the Edition of Dante published by Nicolo della Magna, in 1481, which, in their style of design and com-

* This picture is now preserved, amongst other specimens of the early Florentine school of painting, in the collection of the Gallery of Florence.

position, closely resemble the known works of painting still existing by this ancient Florentine artist, we are surely not going too far, when we conclude, that these pieces are those to which the Aretine biographer intended to refer.

But although the text of Vasari warrants such a conclusion, and, indeed, seems to authorise no other, still it must be confessed, that these pieces from Dante bear, in their style of execution, a very strong resemblance to the engravings which we have ascribed to Baldini, and especially to the series of the Prophets, and the three prints in the Monte Santo di Dio. Hence, no doubt, the opinion of those who consider the pieces in question to have been *designed* only by Botticelli, but engraved by Baldini; an opinion which we have already shewn to be in opposition, not only to the letter, but also to the general spirit, of Vasari's account. For, as we before observed, the task of making certain drawings from Dante, for Baldini to engrave from, could not have occupied Botticelli (who was one of the most practised designers of his age) for that length of time, or have given rise, in consequence, to that embarrassment in his affairs, which Vasari describes. It is not improbable that Baldini, to whom Botticelli was in the habit of furnishing designs, might, in return, have instructed his friend in the art of engraving; and that the latter, who, as Vasari says, was fond of novel pursuits, finding the task of engraving figures upon so small a scale more troublesome than he had expected, called in the occasional aid of Baldini. Perhaps, on the other hand, Sandro might now and then have corrected the outline of Baldini's engravings, on the copper; and indeed I cannot help suspecting that he did so, in some parts of the first print in the "Monte Santo di Dio;" especially the head and the upper part of the figure of the young man looking up to heaven.

Lanzi* was of opinion, that the first two engravings of the Dante of 1481, only, (which, in all the copies of that work, are found printed upon the pages at the beginning of the first and

* "Storia Pittorica," tom. i. p. 83.

second cantos,) were executed by Botticelli himself; and that the other seventeen, which are sometimes found, pasted in the vacancies left for the purpose at the beginning or at the end of other cantos, were engraved by a different and inferior artist. But I cannot discover a difference sufficiently marked, between those two prints and the others, to justify such a supposition. For although, in some of the latter pieces, the heads and the extremities of the figures appear to be drawn with less care and intelligence than is the case in the first two, the same cannot be said of others. Upon the whole, whilst I admit that the question is one of extreme difficulty, I incline to the opinion, that a few of the engravings are entirely the work of Botticelli; that he was assisted, more or less, by Baldini in the execution of others; and, that some of them were engraved by Baldini alone.

Engravings for the Edition of DANTE, *printed at Florence, by* Nicolo di Lorenzo della Magna, *in* 1481.

These prints measure six inches three-quarters in width, by three inches three-quarters in height.

I. *Canto.* On the left of this piece, is a fine expressive figure of Dante, lost in contemplation, in the depths of a forest. Nearer the centre, the poet again appears, coming out of the wood, and looking up, his left-hand raised over his head, towards the sky. Both these figures are turned towards the right. A little further, towards the right, the spirit of Virgil, the destined guide of Dante, makes its appearance: the upper part only of this figure is seen. In the fore-ground, on the right-hand, are a lion and a panther; and, behind them, the author of the poem is introduced, for a third time, in a very animated figure, in a back view, running away terrified from a wolf.

In this engraving, as well as in most of the others of the series, the artist has included the representations of different passages of the

Canto, and, of consequence, of different points of time, within the limits of the same composition; according to the custom of the early schools of painting. The whole is executed with great feeling, and the heads and the extremities of the figures, especially, evince more intelligence of design than Baldini was, I think, master of.

II. *Canto.* Dante and Virgil appear, on the left of the print, standing, in earnest conversation, under the foliage of two trees: the former being seen in a back view, the latter in front. In the middle, upon a rising ground, the two poets are introduced a second time; Dante, as before, being represented in a back view, and Virgil in front. The eyes of both of them are directed towards a small and not inelegant female figure, intended to represent Beatrice, which appears, surrounded by rays of glory, in the sky. At the top of a hill, on the right, is the entrance into Hell, over which is inscribed: PER ME.

The two above described pieces will be found copied in Heineken's 'Idée Générale,' and in Jansen, 'Essai sur l'Origine de la Gravure.' An indifferent copy of the second piece is likewise given in Strutt's 'Dictionary of Engravers.'

III. *Canto.* On the left of this engraving, on the further side of the river Acheron, Dante and Virgil are represented about to enter the gate of Hell; their figures being directed towards the right. Virgil points, with his left hand, to an inscription over the entrance, which Dante appears to read with emotion. This inscription, in which the letter s is in both instances reversed, contains the first words of the three celebrated lines at the opening of the third canto:

PER ME *si va nella citta dolente,*
PER ME SI VA *nell etherno* dolore*
PER ME SI VA TRA *la perduta gente.*

* So spelt in the edition of 1481.

In the centre of the piece, Dante and Virgil appear a second time, within the precincts of Hell; and, beyond them, a group of unhappy spirits, amongst whom a king and a bishop may be descried, is seen following a demon who bears a standard. The steps of all these figures are directed towards the right. On the right of the piece, Dante and Virgil appear a third time, standing on the brink of the river, and turned towards the left; and the figure of Dante is also represented a fourth time, fallen down in a swoon. Between these figures and the spectator, the hideous Charon, with wings, and the face of a monster, is seen, sitting in his boat. This print is numbered 3 (the figure reversed) and also III. at the left corner at bottom.

A fac-simile of this engraving will be found in the fourth volume of the 'Bibliotheca Spenceriana.'

IV. *Canto.* In the upper part of this piece, towards the left, Dante appears recumbent, and just awakened from the swoon or trance into which he had fallen by a clap of thunder. Further to the left, he is represented again, descending, with his guide, into Limbo, the outer circle of the infernal regions. This habitation of the souls of the Poets, the Philosophers, and the Heroes of Antiquity, is surrounded by seven circular walls with battlements, and, on the right, are seven towers. In the circular space in the centre, Dante and Virgil are once more seen, conversing with the spirits which inhabit the place. An armed figure, in the middle, was probably intended to represent Julius Cæsar: Latinus, and his daughter Lavinia, appear seated, a little on the right of the last-mentioned figure; and three other figures are represented standing. Further to the right, behind the towers before-mentioned, appears Homer, who is represented with a sword, and is followed by Horace, Ovid, and Lucan.

The number of the piece is rudely engraved, in Roman numerals, at the left corner at bottom; and the Arabic figure, 4, is at the right hand corner at top.

V. *Canto.* In the upper part of this piece, on the left hand, are seen Dante and Virgil, who are arrived within the second circle: here Minos decides respecting the punishments of the condemned spirits that are brought before him, some of which are seen precipitated into the abyss by a whirlwind. In the fore-ground, on the right, the two poets are represented a second time. Dante appears calling to him the spirits of Paolo and Francesca, which are seen mourning their fate in the space above. The number V is engraved near the left hand corner at bottom.

VI. *Canto.* The centre of the print represents the monster Cerberus, with wings, large claws, and three heads. He is seated amongst the wicked, condemned of the vice of gluttony, whom he tears in pieces; at the same time that they are also punished by a continued shower of enormous hail stones. The monster is turned towards the left, and appears threatening the destruction of Dante, who is introduced in the upper part of the piece, on that side, in an attitude indicating his alarm. Under the figure of Dante, that of Virgil is represented, in the act of collecting a large handful of earth or mud, in order to throw it at the monster, to quiet him. On the right of the piece, Virgil and Dante are again represented; Dante being in conversation about the two parties of the *bianchi* and the *neri*, with a Florentine, named Ciacco; whose figure, kneeling on one knee, is turned towards the right. The number of the Canto is introduced in a reverse direction, so as to appear like four, IV. on the left-hand, at bottom.

This piece will be found copied in the fourth volume of the 'Bibliotheca Spenceriana.'

VII. *Canto.* In this piece the punishments of the avaricious and the prodigal are represented. These persons, amongst whom are introduced a bishop, a cardinal, a king, and an emperor, appear on the ground, on their hands and knees; and are employed in rolling large weights, by pushing at them with their breasts. In the middle

of the print, near the top, the monster Pluto appears falling backwards at the rebuke of Virgil, who is represented, with Dante, upon a rising ground on the right. The two poets appear again, lower in the composition, towards the left; and in the middle, at bottom, the upper part of the figures of Virgil and Dante are seen, for a third time, descending into the fifth circle. The number of the canto, seven, appears in a reverse direction, on the left-hand, at bottom.

VIII. *Canto.* In the middle of the upper part of this piece, Dante and Virgil are seen, between two rocks, descending towards the river Styx. On the right they appear, a second time, at the bank of the river, about to enter the boat of Phlegias. In the centre of the print, the boat of Phlegias is again introduced, and Virgil appears pushing away the spirit of Philippo Argenti, who had endeavoured to insult Dante. On the left are two towers, guarding the entrance of the burning city of Dite. A demon appears running in at the gate; and, behind him, Virgil is represented, for the fourth time, comforting and encouraging Dante, who had been so terrified at what he saw, as to be induced to desire his immediate return to the regions of light. At the bottom of the print, near the middle, the number eight is inscribed in Roman numerals reversed.

IX. *Canto.* On the right of this piece, the horrid figure of Medusa is introduced; and, in the middle, Virgil appears covering the eyes of Dante with his hands, lest, seeing her, he should be turned into stone. Behind the group of Dante and Virgil is a tower, and a celestial spirit which appears crossing the river Styx dry-footed. On the left is another tower, upon the summit of which are three furies, enveloped in flames. The gate of this tower is opened by the angel, with the touch of his wand, to the astonishment and mortification of two groups of demons, which guarded it on either side.

The number nine, in Roman numerals reversed, is engraved near the middle of the print, at bottom; thus: IIIIV.

X. *Canto.* On the left, at the upper part of the print, is an open gate, guarded by two demons. Dante and Virgil have just entered it, and find themselves in an inclosed place, filled with burning sepulchres, containing the souls of those who have been condemned of heresy. In the middle, at bottom, Virgil, accompanied by Dante, is introduced, a second time, pointing to the cover of one of these sepulchres, on which is inscribed, in four lines—PAPAN ASTAS IO GU ARDO; the letter S in both instances being reversed. More to the right, Dante is seen, a third time, in conversation with the Florentine Cavalcante, whose head and left arm appear rising amidst the flames out of his sepulchre. The figure X. is inscribed at the bottom of the plate, near the middle. This piece is inferior, in point of design, to most of the pieces of the series.

XI. *Canto.* Dante and Virgil are here represented in the upper part of the print, on the left: they are seated upon a rocky eminence, amongst burning sepulchres of a different kind from the former, in which the heads of their miserable inhabitants appear through the flames. The cover of the tomb of the pope is again represented, on the right of the figure of Dante; and is inscribed, in five lines, thus: ANAS TASIO PAPA GUAR DO—the S being in both instances in its proper direction. The No. XI., in Roman numerals, reversed, so as to appear like nine; thus: IX.—is inscribed at the left-hand corner, at bottom.

XII. *Canto.* In the upper part of this piece, on the left, the Minotaur is represented, who, at the appearance of Virgil and Dante, being unable to do them injury, turns his rage against himself. In the distance, near the centre, Dante and Virgil are again introduced, near the river of blood, in which those are plunged

[illegible] Fimile of the Vignette to the [illegible]th Canto of the DANTE of 1481

who have been guilty of the blood of others. On the right-hand, the centaurs Nessus, Chiron, and Pholus, oppose their passage. On each side of the river of blood are placed the centaurs, that they may shoot their arrows at those condemned spirits who venture to raise themselves above the surface of the stream. The figure of Dante is represented, a third time, in the fore-ground on the right, seated on the back of a centaur, which Chiron has given orders to carry him. The number XII. is inscribed, in characters reversed, on the left-hand of the plate, at bottom.

By the permission of George Hibbert, Esq. who, for that purpose has obligingly favoured the author with the loan of one of the finest copies of the Dante of 1481 in the kingdom, a careful fac-simile of this piece is given to the reader in the annexed plate.

XIII. *Canto.* Dante, accompanied by Virgil, enters a thick wood, in which there is no path, and wherein the trees are full of knots, and covered with empoisoned thorns. The trees of this forest contain, shut up within their barks, the souls of condemned persons, and amongst their branches are the harpies. Dante and Virgil appear three times in this composition: first, in the upper part of the piece, on the left; secondly, a little towards the right, where Dante is seen tearing a branch containing the soul of Piero delle Vigne; and, thirdly, in the fore-ground, on the right, where Virgil appears collecting together the fragments which have been torn from the bush containing the soul of Jacomo da Padoua, by the dogs employed to hunt down and tear in pieces the miserable Lano Sanese. The number XIII., in Roman numerals, reversed, is inscribed at the bottom of the plate, near the middle.

XIV. *Canto.* This piece represents a tract of sterile land, covered with burning sand, where those who have been guilty of impiety towards Heaven, are tormented by flames of fire falling upon them from above, and resting on various parts of their bodies. The figures of the damned are all naked, and running, or struggling on

the ground, in various attitudes, expressive of the tortures they endure. One alone, whose head is covered with a regal crown, and who is intended to represent the proud and impious Capaneus, lies recumbent, in tranquil state, as if despising the utmost rigour of divine vengeance. Dante and Virgil, who are on an elevated wall on the left, appear to be in conversation with Capaneus. The two poets also appear, a second time, on the right. The forest, which constitutes the subject of the last described piece, forms the background of the present one. The number XIIII., reversed, is inscribed on the left-hand corner, at bottom.

XV. *Canto.* In this piece, Dante and Virgil appear standing on one of the two broad walls, or banks of stone, which form a boundary on either side the river of blood, and run in a diagonal direction, from near the left-hand corner of the print at top, to the middle at bottom. The remaining space on the right is occupied by naked figures, tormented like those in the last described print, by flames of fire. The figure of Dante is near the left-hand upper corner of the piece, and is turned towards the right: he is stooping down, and in earnest conversation with the spirit of Brunetto Latini. Virgil, whose figure is placed a little more to the right, and seen in a back view, appears turning round and addressing Dante with the advice that he should remember what Brunetto was telling him. The number XV., reversed, is engraved near the centre, at bottom.

XVI. *Canto.* The same river that appears in the last described piece, forms a more prominent feature in the present. Dante and Virgil are standing on the bank, as in the other. The Tuscan poet is occupied in conversation with the souls of Ruggieri Guidoguerra, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, and Jacopo Rustichucci. Nearer to the right-hand corner, the two poets are again introduced, and Virgil is seen throwing the girdle of Dante at a monster that appears rising from the bottom of the river, and of which Dante seems terrified. The head only of this monster is seen. The number of the canto

is engraved in Roman numerals reversed, on the left-hand bottom corner of the print.

XVII. *Canto.* The monster Gerione, whose head only was seen in the piece last described, is the most striking object in the one before us. His head, which is that of a man, is surmounted by a crown; but his body is that of a serpent, and he has the claws of a griffin. He is turned towards the right, and on his back is seated the poet Virgil, who appears inviting Dante to place himself also on the monster's back, before him. On the right Dante appears a second time, in conversation with three condemned spirits, who appear seated amidst the flames, each with a shield containing armorial bearings hung round his neck. At the bottom of the piece, part of the head of the monster Gerione is seen again, as well as the upper parts of the figures of Dante and Virgil, whom he is conducting, seated on his back, to the lower regions of hell. The number XVII., in characters reversed, is inscribed near the bottom corner, on the left-hand. A copy of this engraving will be found in Mr. Strutt's Dictionary of Engravers. This piece, and the preceding, are executed in a cruder manner than many of the others, and are, at the same time, inferior in point of design.

XVIII. *Canto.* Being brought by Gerione to the foot of a rock, which forms the boundary of the eighth circle, called *malebolge*, the two poets descend from the monster's back. Dante and Virgil appear standing on the left, upon the borders of the *bolgia*, whereon a demon, armed with a scourge in each hand, is driving before him the souls of condemned persons. In the distance, on the right, Dante and Virgil are introduced a second time, and appear to be talking together, concerning Venetico de Caccianimici of Bologna, whose head is seen looking up from below. On the fore-ground, to the left of this group, Dante and Virgil appear, a third time, bending forward towards the left, in order to discover Thais. The figures in this piece have considerable merit, and the whole has

a soft effect. The number XVIII., reversed, is indistinctly engraved at the bottom of the print, near the centre.

XIX. *Canto.* On the left, and in the centre of this piece, are many round pits of equal dimensions. Flames of fire issue from some of them; and the legs of condemned spirits, each with flames at their feet, are seen coming out of others. Dante, and his companion Virgil, make their appearance four times in this piece. First, on the left; secondly, on a sort of arched rock, on the right; and twice at the right-hand corner, at bottom, where the upper part of their figures only are seen. The number XVIIII., in Roman numerals, reversed, is inscribed at the left-hand corner of the piece, at bottom.

Besides the nineteen pieces above enumerated, Mr. Bartsch describes a twentieth, which is no other than a varied composition of the subject represented in the third plate of the series. This piece was probably designed, as well as engraved, by a different hand from any of the above; and is shaded with simple diagonal hatchings in the manner used by Mantegna, and adopted, soon after the establishment of engraving, by a large proportion of the engravers throughout Italy. It has no number. It will be found, copied in outline, in the fourth volume of the 'Bibliotheca Spenceriana,' being inserted as a variety, together with the other nineteen pieces, in Lord Spencer's copy of the Dante of 1481.

Vasari, after having made mention of the prints for the Dante, observes generally, that Botticelli engraved various other pieces from his own designs; and especially a print representing 'the Triumph of the Faith of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, which he assures us was preferable to all that he ever did in that way. Could this identical piece by Sandro be discovered, which, excepting the 'Inferno of Dante,' is the only one Vasari specifies, it would, doubtless, greatly assist us in determining concerning the others by his hand. No ancient engraving, however, exactly answering

the above title, has hitherto been found; and when I venture to suggest that the following piece may, very possibly, be that which the Aretine biographer intended to describe, I must, at the same time, assure the reader, that I should not offer such a conjecture, were it not, in the first place, that the design is so strictly conformable, in its style, to the known works of Botticelli, as to leave, I think, no doubt of its being his; and, secondly, that the subject represented in it, viz. the triumph and universal exercise of the Christian virtues, appears to be such as Vasari, in his hasty, and, often, careless manner of writing, may readily be supposed to have described under the above title; more especially if one of the two probabilities be admitted,—either that he omitted to read the inscriptions on the plate, or that he wrote from memory.

THE PREACHING OF FRA MARCO DI MONTE SANTA MARIA IN GALLO.

Fra Marco, of the Convent of Minor Franciscans at Monte Santa Maria in Gallo, a village near Ancona, is represented preaching from a pulpit, which is placed near the bottom of the engraving towards the left. On the pulpit is this inscription in small minuscules: *frare marco de monte sancta maria in gallo.* The Friar's numerous auditors, some standing, others seated on benches or on chairs, occupy the lower part of the print. Beyond this audience, the mount, or bank of Charity, instituted by Fra Marco, is represented by a large heap of money, from whence certain citizens are distributing alms to the poor. On a label underneath, are the words, MONS PIETATIS, engraved in capitals; as are all the other inscriptions on the piece, except that on the pulpit before-mentioned. Further, in the back-ground, are seven fabrics, four on the left-hand, and three on the right, in which are exhibited the seven works of mercy; and a chapel is also seen, on the right, in which Christ is introduced appearing to St. Gregory, during the celebra-

tion of mass. Each of these fabrics bears an inscription: INFIRMUS ERAM ET VISITASTIS ME—NUDUS ERAM ET VESTISTIS ME, &c. &c. The distance shews, in epitome, within the segment of a circle, the globe of the earth—the ocean—various cities, &c. and, over it, the vault of heaven is represented by various belts or zones of parallel curvature, wherein are placed the seven planets, and the fixed stars. In the centre of the upper part of the print, over these zones, Jesus Christ and the Madonna are seen, seated on either side of the glory of the Father, which is represented by a circular space, left white, and surrounded by two rows of cherubims. Our Saviour, who is on the left, appears giving the benediction with his right hand, whilst, with the other, he holds a scroll, on which is inscribed: VENITE BENIDITTI PATRIS MII. The Virgin is on the right, and holds in her right hand, a scroll, with an inscription commencing thus: FILII DULCISSIME, &c. In the spaces on either side the figures of Christ and the Madonna, are the host of angels, ranged behind each other in four rows of similar curvature to the zones beneath—the entire figures of the angels in the front row being seen, but the upper part only of the others.

At the bottom, on the left-hand, in the impression of this piece described by Bartsch,* is the following inscription: *Septem misericordiae opera. In aes incisa Florentiae sub inventam incidendi artem, cujus archetypum Romae in Musaeo F. Gualdi Ariminen. Milit. S. Stephani asservatur, et Urbano VIII. P. M. Luci reddita.* 1632.

The collection of Mr. Lloyd possesses an impression of this interesting print, but without the inscription at bottom, which has been scratched out. It bears the appearance of a modern impression taken from an ancient engraving, after the plate had been coarsely retouched all over. The figures are designed with great spirit, and, in many parts, very skilfully grouped. In its style of engraving, it bears no resemblance to the prints for the Dante, being shaded throughout by parallel diagonal hatchings, which, in many places,

* "Peintre Graveur," vol. xiii. p. 89.

terminate abruptly at one end, near the contours of the figures, so as to produce a harsh and disagreeable effect. Perhaps it was something of this kind to which Vasari referred when he observed of Sandro's engravings, '*che l'intaglio era mal fatto.*' It measures twenty inches in height, by fourteen inches in width.

Mr. Bartsch considers the above inscription as decisive of the engraving in question being merely a copy of an ancient Florentine print formerly preserved in the Museum Gualdi at Rome; but I think this by no means a necessary inference, and am rather of opinion that the original, spoken of as existing in 1632 at Rome, was the design, or rather the picture, from which Botticelli had engraved the plate; and that this plate having long laid neglected, perhaps in some convent of the Franciscan order, Pope Urban VIII. hearing of it, might, in 1632, give directions that it should be republished. I am, indeed, the more inclined to believe such to have been the case, because Botticelli appears often to have employed himself in painting similar representations of religious mysteries, in compositions of numerous figures on a small scale; and because, in its style of execution, the print in question, so far from having the appearance of a modern copy, bears the strictest resemblance to many known Florentine engravings of the fifteenth century.

This plate, if I am right in the opinion that it is the true one, and not a copy, must, according to Bartsch, have been engraved between the years 1470 and 1480. He informs us that he collects thus much from the *Annales Minorum, seu trium ordinum a S. Fransisco institutorum,* by the father *Luc Wadding. Romae,* 1735. Vol. xiii. p. 456, No. XI. where the author speaks of this ancient engraving* as being preserved in the collection of rarities appertaining to his order. Fra Marco, Mr. Bartsch adds, died in 1496.

* There is, unfortunately, no copy of this work of Wadding, in the library of the British Museum, and, consequently, I have no opportunity of referring to it; else I should hope to find, upon examination, that the *plate* itself, and not an impression from it only, might have been preserved, in the time of the writer, amongst the valuables of the convent to which he belonged.

Since writing the above, I have had the good fortune to meet with an interesting tract of Fra Marco, in octavo, or small quarto, printed at Florence, in 1494, by Antonio Miscomini. The book bears the following title: '*Da Frate Marco dal Monte Sancta Maria in Gallo dell ordine de Frati minori della provincia della Marcha di Ancona fù composto questo libro delli comandamenti di Dio del Testamento Vecchio et Nuovo et Sacri Canoni.*' Under this title is a wood-cut, spiritedly executed in outline, representing 'Fra Marco, preaching,' of which Mr. Dibdin has, I believe, given a fac-simile in one of his typographical works. On the reverse of fol. a. ii. is another wood-cut, copied upon a small case, and with considerable variations, from Botticelli's engraving above described. It is styled, in a printed title over it, '*figura della vita eterna o vero del paradiso et delli modi et vie di pervenire ad quello.*' This work, bound in a volume with one or two other Italian tracts of the same kind, was formerly in the Pinelli Library, and is, at present, in the possession of Messrs. J. and A. Arch. The text, I am sorry to say, gives no further account of its author, than that, in the month of December, 1486, he was preaching at Venice.

The following piece, as well in respect to its style of design, as the manner of its execution, exactly resembles the last described engraving in Mr. Lloyd's collection, and is, no doubt, by the same hand.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

The upper part of this print represents, in the middle, Jesus Christ seated, with his arms extended, in a glory of a form similar to that in which he is standing in the second print of the Monte Santo di Dio, and bordered by ten cherubims. At a small distance from these cherubims is the host of angels, ranged around the glory, so as still to preserve the form of an upright oval. One of the angels,

immediately under the figure of Christ, is standing on the clouds, and holds the instruments of his passion; namely, the cross, the spear, the reed with the sponge, the nails, and the crown of thorns. Four other angels are placed, two on each side of this figure, blowing trumpets. On either side the outer glory of angels, near the top of the print, the patriarchs, the saints, and the martyrs, are ranged in two rows, fifteen on either hand; those in the front row being seated on the clouds, and those behind, standing. Amongst those on the left-hand, the Madonna, St. Peter with the keys, Moses with the tables of the law, and Pope Gregory with the Holy Spirit at his ear, are distinguished; and amongst those on the right, are St. John the Baptist dressed in camel's hair, St. Paul with his sword, and David with a harp or dulcimer.

In the lower part of the print, the composition is divided into two distinct parts, by the sepulchres, of a square form, which their inhabitants have just vacated. On the left, are the righteous, whom the angels are collecting together, and conducting, up four steps, to the gate of heaven. On the right, the devils are dragging or thrusting the wicked into Hell, which is represented divided into different caverns, destined to receive the different classes of sinners, in the heart of a mountain. Under these caverns, in which the wicked are tormented in various manners, as in the representations of Hell described in former pages of this chapter, are the titles: LUSSURIA, ACCIDIA, IRA, GOLA, AVARITIA, INVIDIA, SUPERBIA. The letter S, in these inscriptions, appears in its proper direction.

This most interesting and spirited performance contains, in the whole, not less than an hundred and fifty figures, and measures nineteen inches and a half, in width, by fourteen inches in height. An impression of it, probably taken from the plate after it had been retouched, is in the collection of the British Museum; and another similar, is in the possession of Sir Mark Masterman Sykes, Bart.

The engraving now about to be described, is, in every respect, so exactly what, from my acquaintance with Botticelli's designs and works of painting, I should expect from him, that, from the

first moment I chanced to see it, I have entertained little or no doubt of its being really a genuine production of his burin. The composition, the design, the characters, are decidedly his; and the bold negligence, approaching to rudeness, with which it is engraved, is truly characteristic of a painter; at the same time that it appears to justify Vasari's criticism respecting the deficiency of Sandro in the executive part of the art. Though engraved with less neatness than the two pieces last described, it is, like them, shaded by simple diagonal hatchings.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE MADONNA.

The lower part of this piece, which is engraved on two large plates, intended to be joined together, represents the Apostles assembled around the vacant sepulchre in which the Virgin was entombed. They are witnesses of her assumption, and are in various attitudes expressive of reverence or astonishment. In the upper part of the print, the Madonna appears seated on the clouds, borne and surrounded by angels bearing palm-trees, lilies, and branches of the rose-tree. Seven of these angels, over her head, are singing out of a large scroll: other angels, four on the right-hand and four on the left, are in the air, playing on musical instruments. Upon a rocky eminence, half way up the print, on the left, is St. Thomas on his knees, extending his hands to receive the girdle which the Virgin lets fall towards him. The distance presents the view of a city.

This piece, when joined, measures thirty inches in height, by twenty-one inches and three-quarters in width. An impression of it is in the valuable collection of Mr. Lloyd.

Of the three engravings above described, it is proper the reader should be informed, that Mr. Bartsch places the first, and the third, in his catalogue of prints by unknown Italian engravers of the fifteenth century; and that, without assigning any authority, he

ascribes the second piece, representing the Last Judgment, to Nicoletto da Modena. That he should not also have augmented the catalogue of his favourite Nicoletto* with the large print last

* In a former chapter of this work, (p. 339, et seq.) I have had occasion to notice the preliminary Essay prefixed by *Mr. Bartsch* to the thirteenth volume of his "Peintre Graveur," and to animadvert upon that writer's unfair attempts to deprive the Italians of the honour due to them as the inventors of chalcography. In his arrangement of the catalogues of the early Italian engravers, in the same volume, the German critic appears to keep the same laudable purpose constantly present to his mind. He had asserted in his Essay, that the Italians never thought of turning their invention to any account until some time after the Germans had gone far towards bringing it to perfection: and it required some management that the bulk of the volume, following that Essay, might not appear at variance with such assertion. Having given an account, therefore, of *Finiguerra*, and a list of the thirty impressions from works of *niello* in the Durazzo Cabinet, he proceeds (instead of attempting a mode of classification calculated to exhibit the gradual progress of the new art at Florence, and in other cities of Italy) to throw a very large proportion of the most ancient Italian engravings together into one undistinguished mass, with others executed at the very close of the fifteenth century, or in the early part of the sixteenth; and indeed, whether from carelessness, or with the view to throw doubt upon the antiquity of the others, he inserts some pieces which would more properly be arranged after those of the scholars of Marc Antonio. Next follows his catalogue of *Baldini*, wherein he studiously avoids the mention of Strutt's ingenious argument in proof of the antiquity of the eight engravings of the planets and the almanack in the British Museum. The short catalogue of *Pollajuolo*'s engravings comes next, and is followed by the catalogue of an unknown engraver, who marked his plates with a P., and sometimes with O. P. D. C., and dated one of them with the year 1511. Mention is next made of *Marcello Fogolino*, of whom he says: "*Peintre qui a vécu vers l'an* 1500, *à Vicence.*" After *Fogolino*, comes *Girolamo Mocetto*, whose engravings, Mr. Bartsch informs us, appear to have been executed at the *close of the fifteenth century*, and *to be more ancient than those of Andrea Mantegna*—of course wishing his readers to infer, that the engravings of *Mantegna* appertain more properly to the sixteenth than to the fifteenth century.

It is needless to remark further on Mr. Bartsch's arrangement of this volume, which, at the same time that it affects to be chronological, is so managed as to leave the incautious reader with the impression, that Italy can only boast of three or four engravers earlier than the commencement of the sixteenth century.

Mr. Bartsch finds the dates 1500 and 1512 on two of the pieces of *Nicoletto da Modena;* and as the engravings of that artist, at the same time that some of them bear the *appearance* of considerable antiquity, are executed with much variety of manner, he has found it convenient to his system to intro-

described, is indeed somewhat extraordinary; since he says expressly of it—" grande pièce dont la taille rappelle les pièces de " la *Passion et les Triomphes de Pétrarque*, gravés par *Nicoleto de* " *Modene.*"

The following series of twelve pieces, representing the Sibyls, are designed so exactly in the manner of Botticelli, and, in their style of engraving, bear so striking a resemblance to the two above described pieces of Fra Marco's Preaching and the Last Judgment, that I think I incur but little risk of error, when I ascribe them to the same artist. Indeed, the more I have examined them, the more I have been convinced that they are his work.

THE SIBYLS.

These pieces measure about seven inches in height, (including the bottom margins, each of which contains, like the Prophets and Sibyls by Baldini, eight Italian verses,) by four inches and an eighth to four inches and a quarter in width. Besides the verses underneath them, they have also other inscriptions. The impressions of nine of these pieces, preserved in the British Museum, have a harsh and disagreeable appearance; and were doubtless taken off after the plates, being worn by frequent printing, had been coarsely retouched. The inscriptions are all in capitals, and the letter S, in all of them, appears in its proper direction. I should consider these pieces to be later, by several years, than the Prophets and Sibyls of Baldini.

1. SIBYLLA PERSICA. She is seated on a cloud, from which proceed rays, and has her feet also supported on a cloud, like some

duce at least thirty of the earliest engravings of the Florentine school amongst them, without any authority whatever, and, I will venture to add, in defiance of every rule of fair connoisseurship.

of the prophets of Baldini. Her figure is turned a little towards the left. She raises her right hand, and points upwards with her fore-finger; and has a book on her lap, which she holds with the other hand. Her long hair falls over her shoulders, and, besides a head-dress of a conical form, she has her brows encircled by a wreath of small flowers. Her title, *Sibylla Persica,* is inscribed on the upper part of the sky, on the right; and on the left is an inscription, beginning: *Ecce filius dei,* &c. The verses at bottom commence thus: *Ecco per cui la bestia,* &c.

2. Sibylla Libica. She is seated and supported, like the last, on clouds, and is inclined a little towards the left. Her right hand is upon her bosom, and, with her left, she holds a book which lies on her lap. Her head-dress is fanciful, and not inelegant, and, like the sibyl Persica, she wears a wreath of flowers. Her title is in the sky, on the left; and, on the right, is an inscription: *Ecce venientem diem,* &c. The verses at bottom begin: *Il di verra chelletterno signore,* &c.

3. The Sibyl Delphica. Mr. Bartsch does not appear to have seen this piece, nor is it in the British Museum.

4. Sibilla Chimicha. She is seated, according to Mr. Bartsch, like the two first described figures, and is seen in front. She holds an open book with her left hand, at which she points with her right, and wherein is inscribed: *In pueritia sua,* &c. Her title, *Sibilla Chimicha,* is engraved on a scroll. The verses at bottom begin: *Una Vergine Sancta,* &c.

5. Sibylla Eritea. She is dressed in a habit resembling that of a nun, and is seated on a cloud, like the figures above described. The cloud upon which her feet are supported, is enclosed within a double circle enriched with stars. She is seen in front, and holds a sword in her right hand, whilst, with her left, she supports a large

open volume, on which is an inscription, commencing: *Morte morietur*, &c. Her title, *Sibylla Eritea*, is inscribed on a scroll, part of which is seen on each side her head. The verses at bottom commence: *Risguardo iddio dello excelso abitacolo*, &c.

6. Sibilla Elispōtica. She is seated on a singular and fanciful kind of chair, made of the branches of the palm-tree joined together, and is turned towards the left. With her left hand she holds a book, which rests on her knee; and, with her right, a large scroll, which rises up above her head, and bears an inscription, commencing: *Ex eccelso habitaculo*, &c. Her title is engraved, in larger characters, in the sky, underneath the scroll. The verses at bottom begin: *Nella miescola stando vidi fare*, &c. Bartsch observes that, in the first impressions of this piece, part of the drapery which covers the right knee of the sibyl is left light; but that in the retouched impressions, this part is entirely covered with hatchings. This is the case with the impression in the British Museum; and indeed I have little or no doubt that all the nine pieces of the series, preserved in that collection, and now before me, are retouched impressions.

7. The Cumean Sibyl. Mr. Bartsch does not appear to have been acquainted with this piece, nor is it in the collection of the British Museum.

8. Sibilla Samia. She wears a high head-dress, over which is a veil, and sits on a handsome seat with a cushion. Her figure is turned towards the right. She holds part of her vest, which is richly embroidered, with her right hand, and rests her left hand on a large book, which is upon her knee. A naked sword lies, traversing the print, at her feet. On a long scroll, which winds behind her, part of it touching her left knee, is an inscription, commencing: *Ecce veni et dives et pauper*, &c. Her title is engraved, on the right, in the sky, under part of the scroll.

The verses at bottom begin thus: *Echo che presto ne verra quel die,* &c.

9. SIBYLLA PHRIGIA. She is seated and supported on clouds, in the manner already described, and is turned towards the right. She wears a kind of turban, and from under it proceeds a veil, the folds of which are fancifully, and not ungracefully, twisted round her neck. On her lap is an open book, which she supports with her left hand, whilst, with her right, she appears pointing to its contents. On the left, in the sky, is her title; and, on the right, is an inscription beginning thus: *Veniet de super filius,* &c. The verses at bottom commence: *Vidi lo excelso iddio,* &c.

10. SIBYLLA TIBURTINA. She is seated and supported on clouds, and is turned a little towards the right. In her left hand, which is extended on the right of the print, she holds a book, closed, at which she points with her other hand. Her title is inscribed on the left, in the sky; and above, is a scroll, the windings of which are seen on either side her head. On the scroll is an inscription, commencing: *Nascetur in Bettelem,* &c. The verses at bottom commence: *El gusto iddio a tal mestier ma data,* &c.

11. SIBYLLA EUROPA. She is seated on clouds, like the last, and is turned a little towards the left. She supports a large book, open, on her knee, to the contents of which she points with her left hand; looking, at the same time, at the spectator. On the book is an inscription: *Veniet colles et montes,* &c. Her title is on a scroll behind her head. The verses at bottom begin: *Verra quel verbo eterno immaculato,* &c.

12. SIBILLA AGRIPPO. She is seated on clouds, like the last-described, and is turned a little towards the left. She holds a large book, open, with her right hand, and points towards it with her left. In the book is an inscription: *Hoc verbum invisibile,* &c. and

on a scroll over her head is her title. The verses underneath begin as follows: *Quando sara questo sommo dilecto,* &c. This print is more coarsely executed than the others; and was, I am inclined to think, entirely engraved by the artist by whom they were retouched. Perhaps the original plate of this figure had been lost; and it became necessary to re-engrave the piece, in order to complete the new edition of the work. [Bartsch, 'Peintre Graveur,' tom. xiii. p. 95, No. 20; and p. 98, No. 32.]

Baldinucci, as we have had occasion to remark in a former Chapter,* says, in his life of Botticelli, that "that artist engraved "a considerable number of pieces from his own designs, but that, "in the course of time, they were, for the most part, destroyed, or "lost through neglect, in consequence of the great improvement "which took place in the art of engraving after his time: inso-"much," continues he, "that the only engravings I have chanced "to see by his hand, are a set of twelve pieces, representing, in very "small figures, divers stories of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ."† In this passage, I am of opinion, Baldinucci meant to say, that, in consequence of the rapid advancement which Marc Antonio and others made in the art of chalcography after Botticelli's time, the copper-plate printers,‡ who were in possession of the engraved plates of that ancient artist, soon neglected to print them, finding them in little demand; and perhaps also, that at length they effaced some of them, in order that the plates, after they were polished anew, might serve for other engravings, better suited to the taste of the day. Baldinucci does not, however, appear to have had any express authority for the above remark; nor should I have thought

* Chap. i. pp. 41, 42.

† *Baldinucci*, "Notizie de' Professori del Disegno," &c. *Edizione con Annotazione del Manni*, tom. iv. p. 64.

‡ It may be proper to observe that the copper-plate printers appear to have become the chief proprietors of engraved plates, throughout Italy, soon after the beginning of the sixteenth century.

his words required any comment, were it not that Bartsch* seems to have considered them as bearing a reference to some especial suppression of Sandro's engravings, by the interference of magisterial authority.

I will only add, concerning Sandro Botticelli, that I am much inclined to be of opinion that, amongst the anonymous engravings mentioned by Bartsch, in the thirteenth volume of the work so often referred to, there may be many others, besides those above described, which might, with propriety, be enumerated in this place as the probable productions of his hand; and especially the six prints of "the Triumphs of Petrarch," inserted by him, as has been before observed, in his Catalogue of Nicoletto da Modena. I am, however, unacquainted with these pieces, and I found my conjecture, principally, upon Mr. Bartsch's own observations as to the resemblance which they bear to some of those that I have seen.

ANTONIO DEL POLLAJUOLO.

Nat. 1426. *Ob.* 1498.

We possess, of Antonio del Pollajuolo, a large engraving, bearing his name; and he is said, by Vasari, to have executed several others: but that author has neglected to specify the subjects they represent; and I have therefore, with a view to facilitate the discovery of some of them, judged it expedient to extract such passages from Vasari's account of Pollajuolo, as may serve to make the reader acquainted with the general character of his works.

* "Peintre Graveur," tom. xiii. p. 160. "Les estampes de Boticello," says he, "ne "peuvent avoir existé qu'en très petit nombre, "*parceque* les planches en ont été *supprimées*, "comme Baldinucci nous l'apprend positive-"ment." The expression of Baldinucci will not, in fact, admit of such an interpretation. He says of Sandro's engravings: "le "quali in tempo son *rimase oppresse* a cagione "del gran megliorare, che ha fatto quell' "arte dopo l'operar suo."

This artist, one of the most eminent of his time in painting and sculpture, was born in the city of Florence, of very low parentage. His father, however, fortunately saw in him the promise of talent, and, being too poor to give him, and his brother Pietro, a literary education, placed Antonio with Bartoluccio Ghiberti, a goldsmith of great reputation, and his other son with Andrea del Castagno, who was then considered the best painter in Florence. "Antonio, "therefore, under the guidance of Bartoluccio, learned the art of "setting jewels, acquired practice in works of enamel upon silver, "and was soon considered more skilful in the use of his tools than "any goldsmith of his time.

"Lorenzo Ghiberti was, at this period, employed in the Brass "Gates for the Baptistry of Florence; and, having noticed the "ability of Antonio, engaged him to assist him in that work, "together with several other young men.* Lorenzo, therefore, "having set him about one of the festoons, which he had then in "hand, Antonio made a quail, which is still to be seen, so beauti-"fully, and with such perfection, that it seemed ready to fly away. "Antonio, therefore, had not been many weeks thus occupied, "before he was allowed to be the best amongst those who were "employed to assist Lorenzo in his work; as well for his know-"ledge of design, as for his ingenuity and diligence: and having "soon acquired the reputation of a consummate artist, he shortly "afterwards left Bartoluccio and Lorenzo, and opened a hand-"some goldsmith's shop of his own, in Mercato Nuovo, in the "above-named city; where he for many years followed that art; "designing continually, and modelling bassi-relievi, and other "things, in wax; so that in a short time he was considered, as he "really was, the first in his profession."

After the passage, often before referred to, relative to Maso Fini-

* At this time Antonio was quite a lad, as appears from the passage in Vasari's life of Ghiberti, where he enumerates some of those who assisted him in the celebrated bronze gates. See p. 289.

guerra,* Vasari proceeds to inform us that Antonio† did some stories in competition with that artist; "in which he equalled him in diligence, and surpassed him in design."

"In consequence of this," continues he, "the 'Consoli dell' "Arte de' Mercatanti,' seeing the skill of Antonio, deliberated "amongst themselves, whether or not, as some stories in silver "were required to be made for the altar of S. Giovanni, Antonio "should not be commissioned to execute them; for it had long "been their custom to allot, at different times, these works to the "most skilful artists. This question being decided in the affirm- "ative, Antonio executed two bassi-relievi, in which he represented "the Supper of Herod, and the Dancing of the Daughter of Hero- "dias; which were of such excellence as to be considered superior "to any of the others which had been done. But above all is to "be admired his figure of S. John the Baptist, entirely of chiselled "work, which is in a space in the middle of the altar.‡ Whence "the said 'Consoli' also commissioned him to make the silver "candlesticks, each of three cubits in height, together with a cross

* See pp. 265, 290.

† It is supposed, as has been before observed, that Pollajuolo was first employed in the works at S. Giovanni (the Baptistry) about 1450. See p. 290.

‡ Vasari was in error when he ascribed this figure of John the Baptist to Pollajuolo, as we learn in Gori's Thesaurus Veterum Diptychorum (tom. iii. p. 312), where that learned antiquary, upon the authority of the original books of the company above mentioned, informs us that it was the work of Michelozzo, the son of Bartolommeo, in 1452. In the next page, Gori ascribes (no doubt upon the same authority) the story of the Nativity of John the Baptist to Antonio del Pollajuolo. And afterwards, "duae vero "ex argento compositæ (sunt) quae ostendunt "Johannis Baptistæ in carcere decollationem, "et ostensionem ejus capitis in disco tem- "pore convivii natalitii regis Herodis; opus "*Andreæ Michaelis del Verrocchio.*" The latter of these stories is, undoubtedly, the same out of which Vasari has made two: ascribing them, at the same time, to *Antonio del Pollajuolo*, instead of their real author, *Andrea Verrocchio:* so that in this small space, he has committed as many errors as he well could. He seems, however, to have been generally right in the encomiums which he bestowed upon Pollajuolo, who, from the before-mentioned Gori's account of the extensive works of silver made at this time for the Company di Mercatanti, appears to have been considered the greatest amongst the artists employed.

" of proportionate magnitude: all which works he finished with " the greatest perfection; engraving upon them so many beautiful " things, that they have ever since been the admiration of the " natives of Tuscany, as well as of strangers.

" In this profession Antonio laboured with incredible diligence; " as well in the works which he made of gold, as in those of enamel " (smalto) and silver; amongst which are certain paxes in S. Gio- " vanni of very great beauty; for, although coloured with the fire, " they are so finely executed, that they could be done but little " better with a pencil. And in other churches, at Florence, at " Rome, and in other towns of Italy, are to be seen works of enamel " by his hand, which are truly astonishing."

Vasari next mentions several young men to whom Antonio taught the goldsmith's art; and then proceeds to relate, that being desirous of excelling in the more noble art of painting,* he quitted his former profession, and applied to his brother Pietro, from whom, in a few months, he learned the use of colours. He adds, that, in company with Pietro, Antonio executed many works of painting, in oil colours, on board, on the wall, and on canvass; after, which he goes on to describe those which that artist painted without his brother's assistance.

" In the chapel of S. Sebastian, belonging to the Pucci family, " at the convent ' de' Servi,' he painted the altar-piece, represent- " ing the martyrdom of that saint. In this picture, besides the

* It appears, however, that Antonio did not so soon abandon the Goldsmith's profession, but that he exercised it, at least occasionally, to a late period of his life. Baldinucci cites a document of a determination of the government of Florence, in consequence of the victory of Volterra, to present the Conte d' Urbino, who commanded their forces upon the occasion, with some pieces of plate, and, amongst the rest, with a silver helmet, made by Antonio del Pollajuolo; and his Annotator, Manni, cites the public archives, under the year 1489, as follows: *Dominus Franciscus Archangeli de Cavalcantibus Cappellanus Cappellanice Virginis Marie de Baroncellis in Ecclesia Sancti Petri Scheradii locat ad pensionem Antonio olim Jacobi del Pollaiolo Aurifici Civi Florentino unam apothecam ad usum Aurificis in populo S. Cecilie in Via di Vaccherecia.*

" figure of S. Sebastian himself, which was painted from the life, " and is the portrait of Gino di Lodovico Capponi, are several " excellent horses, well drawn naked figures, and admirable fore- " shortenings; and, indeed, it is the most esteemed work of paint- " ing that Antonio ever produced. Throughout this work, he " sought to imitate nature to the utmost of his abilities; and so " well succeeded, that, in the figure of one of the archers, who, " having placed the shaft of his cross-bow against his breast, stoops " down to pull the thong, he expressed in a most lively manner " the exertion necessarily employed, even by a strong man, in " bending such a powerful instrument: for we see in this figure the " swelling of the veins and muscles, and even that the man holds " his breath, that he may acquire additional force. Nor is this " figure only worthy to be admired, but also the others, which, in " various attitudes, bear ample testimony to the diligence and " research employed by the artist in this picture;—industry which " Antonio Pucci, his employer, was so sensible of, that, upon the " work being finished, in 1475, he presented Antonio with three " hundred crowns; observing, at the same time, that he paid little " more than the value of the colours.* After this, he painted, at " S. Miniato, on the outside of the church, near the entrance, a " figure of S. Christopher, ten cubits in height; a work of great " excellence, and finished in a style nearly approaching to the " modern; and which was considered the best proportioned figure,

* Of this picture there is an outline, very indifferently executed, in the Etruria Pittrice, and also a separate print of the two figures with cross-bows, shaded; but very inferior to the originals. Vasari's eulogium of the picture is, notwithstanding, I think, greatly exaggerated. It is painted in a good sober tone of colour, and with considerable force, and the figures are more correctly and powerfully drawn than those of any painter who preceded him; but, as a composition, it is by no means to be admired; for, independently of the archers being placed at measured distances round the figure of the saint, four of them are evidently copied, with little or no variation, from the same modelled figure, seen in different views; and the other two figures, charging their cross-bows, from a second model, one seen in a back-view, the other in front.

" of its size, that had then been produced.* He also painted a " crucifix, with a S. Antonino, on cloth, which is placed in a chapel " at S. Marco, at Florence; and a figure of S. John the Baptist, " in the ' Palazzo della Signoria.'

" In the house of the Medici family, he painted, for Lorenzo the " elder, three pictures of Hercules, of five cubits in height. In the " first of these, wherein he is represented squeezing Antæus to " death, the figure of Hercules is most admirable; as we see ex- " pressed in it, in the most lively manner, the great exertion of " Hercules, who, grinding his teeth, and straining every nerve and " muscle of his body to the utmost, raises himself on tiptoe, that he " may the better accomplish his purpose. Nor was he less suc- " cessful in the figure of Antæus, who, pressed within the arms " of Hercules, seems to have become faint, to have lost all vigour, " and, with his mouth open, to be at the last gasp. In the second " piece, in which he is represented killing the lion, Hercules presses " his left knee against the breast of the lion, whilst with both hands " (grinding meanwhile his teeth) he tears open the jaws of the fero- " cious animal; unmindful of the wounds which, in its defence, it " is inflicting upon his arms. The third picture, in which Hercules " is killing the Hydra, is a most wonderful performance; especially " for the serpent, which is coloured with such skill, and so much " like life, that it is impossible to surpass it. And, indeed, the poison, " the fire, the fierceness, and the rage of the monster, are expressed " with so much vivacity, that it is worthy not only to be celebrated, " but also to be imitated, in these respects, by all good artists. For " the company of S. Angelo, in Arezzo, he painted, in oil, a stan- " dard to carry in procession; on one side of the cloth of which he " represented a crucifixion, and, on the other, a S. Michael, fighting " with the dragon; which last is one of the finest things that

* *Baldinucci*, tom. iv. p. 23, mentions a tradition, " that Michelagnolo Buonaroti, when a young man, frequently designed from this figure of Pollajuolo." When Baldinucci wrote, the fresco was still in tolerable preservation. His annotator, *Manni*, in 1769, regrets that it had been lately much injured by the hand of an ignorant restorer.

" Antonio ever did: for the figure of the S. Michael, who, with " undaunted courage, attacks the dragon, grinding meanwhile his " teeth, and curving his brow, seems truly descended from heaven, " to work the vengeance of the Almighty upon the pride of " Lucifer.

" Pollajuolo understood the naked body better than any artist " before him, and dissected many dead subjects in search of anato- " mical knowledge. And he was the first who discovered the " method of searching out the muscles, so as to represent them " in their proper form and order in his figures; and of all these, " encircled by a chain, he engraved a battle, on copper; and, after " that, he executed other prints, which are engraved in a much " better manner than those of the other masters who had been " before him.

" By all these works, Antonio had acquired great celebrity " amongst the artists of his time; insomuch that, upon the death " of Sixtus IV." (in 1483) " Pope Innocent, his successor, invited " him to Rome, where he made, of metal, the monument of Inno- " cent, in which he represented him, from the life, seated in the " manner which he used when he gave the benediction; which " work was placed in the church of St. Peter, by the side of the " chapel that contains the lance which pierced the body of Christ. " He also made the monument of Sixtus, upon which is the recum- " bent figure of that Pontiff, extremely well executed; and this " work being finished at a very great expense, and richly orna- " mented, was placed, entirely insulated, in the chapel called after " that Pope's name.

" It is said that Antonio made, for Pope Innocent, the design for " the fabric of the ' Palazzo di Belvidere,' although, as he had not " much practice in the executive departments of architecture, the " work itself was conducted by others.

" Lastly, Antonio and his brother Pietro, having both of them " acquired considerable fortunes, died, shortly after each other, " in the year 1498, and were buried at Rome, in the church of

" S. Pietro in Vincula; where, in memory of them, a monument is " raised, on the left hand of the chief entrance of the church, with " the portrait of each in marble; and this inscription:

ANTONIUS PULLARIUS PATRIA FLORENTINUS, PICTOR INSIGN. QUI DUOR. PONT. XISTI ET INNOCENTIJ ÆREA MONIMENT. MIRO OPIFIC. EXPRESSIT. RE FAMIL. COMPOSITA EX TEST. HIC SECUM PETRO FRATRE CONDI VOLUIT. VIX. AN. LXXII. OBIJT ANN. SAL. M.IID.

" António made a basso-relievo of metal, representing a battle of " naked figures, which was carried to Spain, and was a work of great " excellence; as may be seen in the plaister casts of it still preserved " in the studies of many of the artists of Florence: and there was " found, after his death, a design and model which he had made for " Lodovico Sforza, for an equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza " Duke of Milan; which design, varied in two different ways, is in " our book of drawings. In one of them, Sforza has, underneath " him, the city of Verona; in the other, he is richly habited, and is " making his horse spring upon an armed soldier; the whole being " supported by a pedestal ornamented with battles. I have been " unable to learn the reason why these designs were not carried " into execution. The same artist made also some most beautiful " medals; amongst which was one, executed upon occasion of the " conspiracy of the Pazzi, representing, on one side of it, the heads " of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, and, on the reverse, the choir " of S. Maria del Fiore, with the fact exactly as it took place. He " likewise made the medals of some of the Popes, and many other " things, with which our artists are not unacquainted."*

In the short passage wherein Vasari speaks of Pollajuolo's engravings, there is a small variation of expression between the first

* The short remaining paragraph of Vasari's life of Pollajuolo is omitted, as containing nothing to our immediate purpose.

and the second editions of his work, which it may be proper to notice. In the first edition, after describing Pollajuolo's engraving of the battle, he simply adds: "and he *also* engraved other plates, "in a better manner than had been practised by other artists." But in the second edition, he says: "and *after that* he engraved "other prints, which were executed in a much better style of en- "graving than had been practised by the artists who preceded "him,"—an expression, could we depend upon Vasari's accuracy, from which it would seem reasonable to conclude, that the battle he speaks of was amongst the earliest of Antonio's productions in that way, and that he afterwards executed other pieces of greater perfection. Be this as it may, there is little doubt that the following piece is the battle of naked figures which Vasari intended to describe; although, as the reader will perceive, the figures it contains are not encircled by a chain.

A BATTLE OF NAKED FIGURES.

This celebrated print represents ten naked figures, each of the dimensions of from nine to eleven inches in height, armed with various offensive weapons, and fighting in a wood. On the right-hand, at bottom, a vanquished warrior, fallen on his back, is stabbed by his opponent, who, standing behind him, raises his head with his left-hand, whilst with the other he inflicts the wound. The conqueror, meanwhile, is himself menaced by the uplifted battle-axe of a man behind him. In the centre of the piece, two warriors, each of them having hold of a chain with the left-hand, are combating with sabres. Behind these two figures, is an excellent figure of a warrior, who, menacing his adversary with a sabre, which he grasps in his right-hand, endeavours at the same time, with his left, to prevent the stroke of a battle-axe, raised against him: and, further to the left, behind the last described figure, is a man drawing a bow. In the fore-ground, on the left, is a

spirited group of two combatants, armed with daggers, which the reader will find carefully copied in the annexed plate. The background represents a forest; and, on the left, upon one of the trees, a large tablet is suspended, on which is this inscription:—OPUS. ANTONII. POLLAIOLI. FLORENTINI. This piece, which was probably engraved between the years 1460 and 1470, measures twenty-four inches and a half in width, by about sixteen inches and a half in height. The outlines of the figures are engraved with a firm and deep stroke, and the internal parts are shaded, with singular delicacy and neatness of workmanship, by zigzag diagonal hatchings. The whole, while it justifies the observation of Vasari, that Pollajuolo possessed a far more perfect knowledge of the construction of the human figure than all the artists who had preceded him, appears also to merit the eulogium bestowed on it by Lanzi, who eloquently styles it—"*la celebre battaglia de' nudi, ultimo e "vicinissimo grado al fiero stile di Michelangiolo.*"*

Of the following engraving of Pollajuolo, described by Mr. Bartsch,† I am not aware that any impression exists in the collections of this country.

HERCULES COMBATING THE GIANTS.

Hercules, whose figure appears near the centre of the print, wears a sabre by his side, on the scabbard of which is inscribed his name, thus: HERCULES. He grasps an axe, with which he combats the giants, who are assailing him on all sides, armed with bows, poniards, and sabres. In the middle, at the bottom of the print, under the figure of a giant, who, being thrown to the ground, covers himself with his shield, is the following inscription: QUOMODO. HERCULES. PERCUSSIT. ET VICIT. DUODECIM. GIGANTES. This piece, continues Mr. Bartsch, does not bear the name of Pollajuolo,

* "Storia Pittorica," tom. i. p. 94. † "Peintre Graveur," tom. xiii. p. 203.

but there is every reason to believe that it is by his hand, although it is somewhat inferior to the last described. It measures about twenty-two inches in width, by fourteen inches and three quarters in height. Mr. Bartsch adds, that the Imperial collection at Vienna possesses an unfinished proof of this engraving, in which the two upper corners of the print appear white. It likewise wants the inscriptions.

Mr. Bartsch also ascribes the following piece to Pollajuolo.

HERCULES AND ANTÆUS.

The right foot of Hercules comes a little forward, and he squeezes Antæus to death, by pressing him round the loins with both his arms. Antæus, meanwhile, makes efforts to disengage himself, by pushing, with his left elbow and right-hand, against the shoulders of his adversary. He bends his head towards the left, and appears to utter cries of agony. The back-ground is dark, except a part of the left edge of the plate. This piece is curved at top, and has neither name nor monogram. It measures about ten inches in height, by near six inches and three quarters in width.

When I insert the following curious print, in this place, as a probable work of Pollajuolo, I must, at the same time, confess that I do so in consequence of its general character as to design and composition, rather than because it bears any particular or striking resemblance to the celebrated battle of naked figures above described, in respect of the mechanism of engraving.

A BATTLE OF CENTAURS.

This piece represents a combat between two centaurs, in the presence of three warriors dressed in armour; each centaur being

armed with a weapon, composed of a staff, to the end of which three ponderous balls are attached by three chains. The centaur on the right-hand has the lower part of a lion: he is seen in profile, is turned towards the left, and has a large bow, and a quiver with arrows, thrown over his shoulder. He raises his weapon with both hands, and is about to inflict a tremendous blow upon his adversary; who, seen more in front, and turned towards the right, rests his right knee on the ground, whilst, with both hands, he raises the staff of his weapon over his head, to ward off the blow. The lower parts of this centaur, whose broken bow is lying on the ground beneath, are those of a horse. The human parts of both these figures are drawn with great anatomical intelligence, and energy of style. On the right, behind the first centaur, is one of the three warriors, holding a short staff with both hands, and turned towards the left; and in the fore-ground, on the left, are the other two warriors, who, turned towards the right, are attentively viewing the combatants. Of these last, the one nearest the centaurs is seen in nearly a back view, and rests his right hand on his haunch; the other leans with his right hand upon his sword, the point of which rests on the ground. Both are excellent and well poised figures. The back-ground represents a hilly landscape with a few scattered trees.

The outlines of the figures, in this piece, are engraved with a firm, deep stroke, but the shading is executed with delicate hatchings, loosely thrown in various directions. It is remarkable that, in many parts of the plate, even in such as are central, the marks of holes, made by nails or pegs of metal, afterwards filled up, are clearly perceptible. These nail-holes appear to be too many in number to justify the supposition, that they were made in order to keep the plate steady whilst printing; and I am, consequently, not without my suspicions that the plate may have been originally engraved and used for the decoration of some piece of furniture, and that, at an after period, it was removed from its original situation, in order that impressions might be taken from it. This

interesting print, which has escaped the researches of Bartsch, was purchased by its present possessor, Mr. Lloyd, from the Riccardi collection. It measures twelve inches and five-eighths in width, by eight inches in height.

VARIOUS ANONYMOUS ENGRAVINGS OF THE EARLY FLORENTINE SCHOOL.

THE LIFE OF THE MADONNA.

This series is composed of fifteen plates; each measuring eight inches and three quarters in height, by six inches and a half in width. Bartsch, as I have had occasion to remark in a former page,* erroneously ascribes the work to Nicoletto da Modena. Heineken was nearer the mark when he inserted it in his catalogue of Botticelli;† who, nevertheless, was not, I think, the author. I have seen only two of the pieces; but these have been sufficient to convince me that the work is of the early Florentine school: they are designed in the best style of the fifteenth century, and are finished, for the most part, in a very delicate manner, by diagonal hatchings. I have recourse to Bartsch, (Peintre Graveur, tom. xiii. p. 257, et seq.) for a description of the pieces.

* See note, pp. 318, 319. Bartsch swells the catalogue of Nicoletto di Modena with these and other ancient Florentine engravings without deigning to assign any reason whatever for so doing. It certainly might have been expected of him that he should account, in some way or other, for the modesty of Nicoletto, in omitting to mark so many of his most capital pieces, even with his monogram; especially as we have so many trivial engravings of single figures of saints by his hand, on which he has signed his name at length. The truth is, that very few of the early Florentine engravers marked their plates with their names or cyphers, and that Nicoletto, seldom, if ever, omitted to mark his.

† "Dict. des Artistes," tom. iii. p. 213. Heineken entitles the series, "the Life of Christ," and is of opinion that it comprises more than fifteen pieces; though he had only seen that number.

I. THE ANNUNCIATION. The angel Gabriel is represented kneeling, on the left of the print, with a branch of lily in his right-hand. He is turned towards the Virgin, who appears rising from her orations; and, with both her hands, expresses her astonishment at the unexpected messenger. The back-ground shews the interior of a vaulted chamber, supported in the middle by a column.

II. THE VISITATION. The Virgin and S. Elizabeth are represented meeting, near the middle of the print, and hold each other by the hand. On the left, behind the Virgin, Joseph is seen, resting with both hands on his staff; and, on the right, behind Elizabeth, Zaccharias appears, holding a stick with his right-hand, and, with his left, raising a part of his mantle. These four figures stand on a magnificent pavement of black and white marble, in front of a temple, supported by columns, which constitutes the back-ground. An impression of this engraving is in the collection of Mr. Lloyd.

III. THE NATIVITY. Near the middle of this piece, the Madonna is seen on her knees, adoring the newly born infant, who is lying on a bed of straw. S. Joseph is standing by, on the left of the print; and, on the right, behind the Virgin, is the stable, with the ox and the ass. In the distance, on the right, the angel announces the birth of Jesus to the shepherds, who are assembled on a hill; and, at the top of the print, in the middle, the Almighty appears, surrounded by a glory of angels.

IV. THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE. In the middle of the print, Simeon is represented, holding the infant Jesus, who is quite naked, and seated on a sort of altar of a hexagonal form. The Madonna is standing on the right, and Joseph, who is prepared with the offering of a pair of doves, is on the left. The scene is a magnificent pavement in front of a temple.

V. CHRIST DISPUTING WITH THE DOCTORS. The youthful Jesus is represented standing on an elevated plane in the centre of the engraving, in the back-ground. The doctors appear sitting on the two sides of the temple; with the exception of two of them, who are standing in the fore-ground of the piece; the one, seen in profile, on the left; the other, represented more in a back view, on the right.*

VI. CHRIST PRAYING ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. Jesus is seen in the back-ground, on the right, turned towards the angel, who is represented holding a chalice. The three disciples appear sleeping in the fore-ground; the first, on the left-hand, is lying on his back; the second, on the right, is seated, and rests his head on both his hands; and the third is lying down in the middle, at a little distance from the others.

VII. CHRIST INSULTED IN THE PALACE OF THE HIGH PRIEST. Jesus appears seated on a sort of throne, under a vaulted roof, in the middle of the back-ground; his head being crowned with thorns,† and his eyes covered with a bandage. He holds a reed with his right hand, and with his left a globe. He is surrounded and insulted, in various manners, by a great number of the Jews, amongst whom may be remarked a man, standing on the left of Christ, who strikes him upon the head with his fist.

VIII. THE FLAGELLATION. Our Saviour appears standing in

* I have little or no doubt that the two figures, which Mr. Bartsch here describes as standing on either side, were intended for the Madonna and Joseph: for, in another page, (264) speaking of the variations between the *first* and the *second* impressions of the piece, he says: "*L'auréole* "*du saint*, qui est debout au devant de la "droite, blanche dans la première épreuve, "est couverte de tailles dans l'épreuve re-"touchée."

† In describing, afterwards, the variations in the two different impressions of this piece, (p. 265) Mr. Bartsch contradicts what he here asserts: for, in speaking of the *second* impression, he says: "La tête du Christ "est couronnée d'épines, *tandis qu'elle ne* "*l'est pas dans la première épreuve.*"

the middle of the print; his hands and his body being bound to a column. He is scourged by two men armed with whips, and, at the same time, the man on the left, pulls the cord by which he is bound. High up, in the back-ground, two of the superiors of the Jews are seen looking on from a balcony; the one on the left-hand having a wand.

IX. CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS. Jesus, bearing his cross, directs his steps towards the right, escorted by a great number of soldiers armed with spears. Meanwhile the commander of the troops, mounted on horseback, lifts his mace, and appears to threaten St. John and the Madonna, who are seen in the foreground on the left-hand, as if desirous to prevent their following the Saviour.

X. THE CRUCIFIXION. Jesus Christ is represented on his cross, in the middle of the print, between the crosses to which are attached the two thieves. Beneath the crosses are a great number of soldiers, on foot and on horseback. In the middle of the foreground, the Madonna is seen fainting, supported and assisted by several pious women, amongst whom is one, on the left-hand, who is on her knees, and seen in a back view.

XI. THE RESURRECTION. Christ is represented in the middle of the print, coming out of the tomb. He holds a banner in his left-hand, and, with his right, gives the benediction.* Six guards are seen sleeping, in different attitudes, on the ground, around the sepulchre. Amongst them one in particular may be remarked, who is

* In the early representations of the Resurrection, the figure of Christ almost always, perhaps I might say invariably, appears giving the benediction with the right-hand, and holding a banner with the other. I mention the circumstance in this place as the reason for a small liberty which I have taken in my translation of Mr. Bartsch's description of this piece. He says, "Il tient une bannière "de la main gauche, et fait de la main droite "élevée un geste comme pour marquer sa "Résurrection."

lying flat on his stomach, on a large shield, in the fore-ground, on the left-hand. Mount Calvary and the three Crosses appear in the distance, on the right.

XII. THE ASCENSION.* The figure of Christ is seen, in the middle of the top of the print, standing on a cloud surrounded with rays of glory, and worshipped by four angels, two of which are in the air, and the others kneeling on the clouds. The Apostles, and the Virgin Mary, who appears on the right-hand, are ranged beneath on their knees, in a semicircular row.

XIII. THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST. The Holy Ghost appears descending upon the Apostles and the Virgin Mary, who are assembled together in the upper apartment of a building, around the bottom of which the inhabitants of Jerusalem are represented, in various attitudes, expressive of their admiration and astonishment. Amongst them, on the right, is a man standing, with his legs asunder, at whose feet is a dog, barking.

XIV. THE VIRGIN PRESENTING HER GIRDLE TO ST. THOMAS.† The Madonna is represented in the middle of the upper part of the print, seated on the clouds: she is surrounded by rays, and also by a glory of angels. St. Thomas is on his knees, on the right, near the tomb of the Virgin, which is filled with flowers. He is seen in a back view, and lifts up his arms to receive the girdle, which she presents to him with both her hands. In the back-ground is a landscape.

XV. THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN.

Of this piece, I happen to possess a first impression in my own

* Mr. Bartsch, carelessly and erroneously, styles this piece, "the Transfiguration."

† Mr. Bartsch places this piece after 'the Coronation of the Virgin,' which it ought to precede; and also makes the mistake of styling the apostle, to whom the Madonna presents the girdle, St. John the Evangelist, instead of St. Thomas.

small collection; and as from the elegance and purity of its design, the richness of its composition, and the delicacy with which it is engraved, it is worthy to be considered one of the most beautiful and interesting specimens of the early Florentine school, the reader, I trust, will not be displeased to have a more detailed description of it than Mr. Bartsch has enabled me to give of any of the other pieces of the series.

The upper part of the print represents the Almighty, seen in a front view, and seated on a throne, raised upon an elevated platform, to which, in the near-ground, there is an approach by three steps. This throne is covered with a canopy of Gothic architecture, surmounted by a dome, which, with the lantern over it, reaches to the top of the piece. On either side the throne, as in the Pax by Finiguerra, in my possession, a cornice is continued to the edge of the print; and over each of these cornices is a rich frieze, composed of ornaments of foliage, two cornucopias, and a vase from which issue flames of fire. The Madonna is devoutly kneeling before the Almighty, who, with both hands, is about to place the crown upon her head: her figure is seen nearly in a back view, but turned a little towards the right. On either side the throne is a pilaster, from the lower part of which a parapet projects forward, as in Finiguerra's Pax of the Assumption; and on each parapet, as in that Pax, is an angel, standing, holding a vase of flowers. Lower down, behind each parapet, the upper part of an angel is seen, holding a branch of lily: lower still, behind, and leaning on two lower parapets, which join to, and form a continuation of the former ones, are two other angels with lilies, one on each side; and at the termination of each of these lower parapets is an angel, on its knees, supporting a festoon of flowers. Higher in the piece, nearly upon a level with the two angels holding the vases of flowers, and immediately under the two cornices before mentioned, stand six angels, three on either side, blowing trumpets; and in the space on each side the throne and the elevated platform, stand a multitude of saints of both sexes. In the near-ground are four other saints,

seen in a back view, on their knees. Of these last, the saint nearest the left-hand is turned towards the right, and has at the back of his head a solid diadem, or glory, of an oval form; the only one in the piece, except the diadem round the head of the Almighty. The next saint, nearer the centre, is a youthful figure, and wears a garland of small flowers: this figure is also turned a little towards the right, and kneels with one knee on the lowest of the three steps before mentioned. The third saint, more to the right, kneels with both knees on the same step, and is turned a little towards the left. The figure of the fourth saint, near the right-hand border of the piece, is also turned towards the left; but his head, which is ornamented with a bishop's mitre, looks upwards towards the right.

The two following interesting specimens of the early Florentine school, are in the possession of Mr. Lloyd.

A BEAR HUNT.

This piece represents a hunter, who, with his five dogs, is attacking and subduing a bear. The bear is turned towards the right, and has hold of one of the dogs with his paws and teeth: meanwhile two other dogs are biting his head, a fourth has seized him by the thigh, and the huntsman, who is behind the bear, on the left, is piercing the animal with his spear. A tree with an upright stem, perhaps intended for a palm-tree, rises behind the group, near the centre; and, in the distance, is a broad river winding amongst rocks. This engraving is not noticed by Bartsch. It is executed much in the manner of the planets of Baldini, described in a former part of this chapter, though the figures are much larger. Perhaps it might, with propriety, have been arranged in our catalogue of that artist's supposed works. It measures eleven inches and a quarter in height, by eight inches in width, and was formerly in the Riccardi collection.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN.

The lower part of this print represents eleven of the Apostles, who, kneeling around the vacant sepulchre of the Madonna, are witnesses of her Assumption. The eyes of all of them, with the exception of one on the right, are directed upwards towards heaven, where the Virgin appears, standing in the clouds, amidst a glory of cherubims, and attended by six angels seated on clouds, three on each side of her, and playing on musical instruments. Upon a bank on the left-hand, in the middle distance, is St. Thomas, who, kneeling on his right knee, has just received the Madonna's girdle. The distance represents a river, upon which are five small boats, and a rocky country interspersed with buildings. Amongst these, on the right-hand, is a water-mill, near which, in a square court, are eight men threshing corn.

The draperies in this piece are designed with much purity though dryness of manner; the figures are arranged with greater formality than is common in the works of those artists of the Florentine school who flourished towards the end of the fifteenth century, and the heads of the Madonna, the Angels, and all the Apostles, have glories or diadems of a solid appearance; marks of distinction which, as I have observed in another place, fell gradually into disuse soon after the middle of the century, and are not, indeed, once found in the large two-sheet print of the Assumption by Botticelli, before described.

Upon the whole, I am inclined to consider this engraving very ancient. I must observe, however, that the impression in Mr. Lloyd's collection appears to have been taken off after the plate, which was originally finished in a very delicate manner, with cross hatchings, had been retouched all over. It measures seventeen inches in height, by twelve inches in width, and is not mentioned by Bartsch.

The following piece is executed in a very different style of

engraving from any hitherto described in this work. The shading, which, in the engravings ascribed to Baldini, is, for the most part, effected by close hatchings, crossing each other in various directions, but without curvature, is here represented by fine curved strokes, terminating, in many instances, in the light parts of the figures, with dots or other short delicate touches of the burin, in the manner used by Martin Schongaver and other ancient engravers of the German school. The landscape also exhibits a similar kind of workmanship. Now we learn from Vasari that the prints of Schongaver made their way into Florence in considerable numbers, many years before the end of the fifteenth century;* and I am therefore of opinion that this plate was executed by some early artist of the Florentine school, who, being struck with the superiority of mechanism displayed in those engravings, desired to imitate them.

Possibly it may be the work of that GHERARDO, a contemporary of Domenico Ghirlandajo, who enjoyed the reputation of a good painter in mosaic, distemper, and, more especially, in miniature; and of whom Vasari relates, that he engraved an excellent copy of one of Martin's engravings representing a Crucifixion, with the Madonna and St. John the Evangelist standing on either side the cross,† and also some other pieces. If, at any future time, Gherardo's

* According to Vasari, Michelangiolo Buonaroti, when a boy, copied the celebrated print of St. Anthony, by Schongaver, in colours. This must have been before the year 1490, since Buonaroti was born in 1474.

† In the first edition of his work, Vasari says nothing of Gherardo's engravings, but he is more explicit as to the time of his death than he is in his subsequent edition. In both of them he states that Gherardo died at the age of sixty-three; but in the first edition, only, he states that his decease was accelerated by grief for the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, his patron. The artist, therefore, probably died about 1493. Vasari, in the life of Gherardo, in his second edition, after speaking of certain works of mosaic executed by him for Lorenzo de' Medici, proceeds as follows: "Whilst Gherardo was employed "in these works, there were brought to Flo- "rence certain prints, in the German style, "executed by Martin, and Albert Durer;" [the mention of Albert Durer's engravings in this place, must be put to the account of the writer's accustomed carelessness,] "and "that kind of engraving happening to please

copy of this Crucifixion should chance to be discovered, it may then be possible to ascertain, by a comparison of it with the piece about to be described, the truth or fallacy of my conjecture.

THE DEATH OF VIRGINIA.

In the middle of the piece, Virginius, dressed in armour, and wearing a helmet ornamented with wings, is about to plunge his uplifted poniard into the bosom of his daughter, who is standing beside him on the left. Both these figures are seen in a front view. Behind the figure of Virginia, on the left, is another female, seen in profile, and turned towards the right, who, raising her arms, endeavours to arrest the stroke of the dagger. On the right, is the Consul Appius. He wears a crown of laurel, and is standing in the midst of a group of men, whose various gestures are expressive of terror and astonishment. On the left, in the back-ground, are three soldiers, two of them armed with spears; and in the fore-ground, on the same side, is a child, who holds a torch, conversing with another child, who is astride on a walking-stick, and holds a sort of weather-cock affixed to the end of a wand in his left hand. The back-ground represents a rocky landscape, with here and there a tree, without any foliage.

The two female figures in this piece are sufficiently graceful, but

" him very much, he set himself to work " with the burin, and copied some of those " engravings extremely well, as may be seen " in *certain pieces* in our book, together with " various designs by his hand." In the introduction to the life of Marc Antonio, Vasari mentions, amongst other engravings of Martin Schongaver, the piece noticed in the text, of " Christ on the Cross, with St. John and " the Madonna, standing; which print," continues he, " was in so good a style of en- " graving, that Gherardo, a Florentine " miniature painter, applied himself to copy " it with the burin, and succeeded admirably; " though, as he did not live long afterwards, " he did not pursue the art further. (non " seguitò più oltre.)" The fair sense to be collected from all these statements seems to be, that, towards the latter part of his life, Gherardo employed himself occasionally in engraving, and that, by way of improving himself in the management of the burin, he copied a few of Schongaver's prints.

those of the men, especially the group of Appius and his attendants, have little to recommend them. The details of ornament in the dresses of the figures are finished throughout with scrupulous diligence, but the naked parts are not so well understood; and the whole savours much of the taste of an artist who was more accustomed to paint or design in miniature, than to execute works upon a large scale. This print measures eleven inches and five-eighths in width, by nine inches and a quarter in height.

We shall close this series of the engravings of the early Florentine school, with some account of the works of Robetta.

ROBETTA.

In the life of Gio. Francesco Rustichi, a Florentine sculptor of some eminence, Vasari gives an amusing account of a society or club, which was founded by Gio. Francesco, and consisted of twelve members, most or all of them artists. The party styled themselves '*la compagnia del Paiuolo,*' and it was their custom to meet at supper, alternately, at each other's houses. In the catalogue of the members of this club, after the name of Rustichi, we read, amongst others, the names of Andrea del Sarto, Domenico Puligo, Aristotile da San Gallo, and Ruberto di Filippo Lippi, all painters; and with these was associated Robetta, who was, doubtless, the author of the engravings we are about to describe, and of whom Vasari gives us no further information, than that he was a goldsmith. These meetings appear to have taken place about the year 1511 or 1512; but we have no information as to the age of Robetta at that time; and, consequently, in conjecturing the epoch to which his works of engraving appertain, we shall be best guided by their style of design, which is evidently that of the latter part of the fifteenth century;* though there is also reason to believe that

* *Mr. Barlsch*, however, tom. xiii. p. 392, says: "on a tout sujet de croire que "*Robetta* florissoit vers 1520, et que par "conséquent ses estampes appartiennent

a few of his engravings were executed in the early part of the sixteenth century.

The works of Robetta bear evidence that he was no ordinary goldsmith. He appears to have possessed a fertile imagination, and to have composed with facility. In his small draped figures of females or angels, he is frequently graceful; but he was not equally successful in his naked figures, which are often lamely drawn, and sometimes ill proportioned. His engravings, which appear executed with freedom, are finished with close hatchings carelessly thrown in various directions; and, in the light parts of his figures, and upon the ground, he sometimes introduces a few dots, or short curved strokes, in the manner used by Schongaver, and other early engravers of Germany or the Low Countries. He sometimes signs his prints with his name at length; but more frequently he uses the four letters RBTA. only. Many of his engravings are without any mark.

Subjects of the Old Testament.

The Creation of Eve.

Adam is represented sleeping, seated on the ground, on the left of the print, his back and his head resting against a cluster of twigs. Eve appears coming out of his side; her hands are joined together, and she bends forwards towards the Creator, who is standing on a bank of earth, on the right. It is remarkable, that the Almighty

" plutôt au commencement du seizième " siècle qu'à la fin du quinzième." *Huber*, however, ' Manuel,' tom. iii. p. 50, is of a very different opinion. " En général," says he, " les productions du burin de Robetta " paroissent de beaucoup antérieurs à celles " de Mantegna." Now it is certain, if Vasari's account is to be depended upon, that the society above mentioned, was in being at least as early as 1512, since he expressly mentions one of their entertainments which took place in that year; and, for aught we know to the contrary, Robetta may then have been a man of sixty, or upwards, as there appears reason to believe his friend Rustichi himself was at that time.

is represented in this print as a very young man, and not, as usual, with a long beard.

This piece, which has neither the name nor initials of the artist, measures six inches and a half in height, by five inches and three eighths in width. (*Bartsch's Catalogue of Robetta, No.* 1.)

Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise.

On the left is the angel, with a sword elevated in his right hand. Adam, whose figure is seen in nearly a back-view, in the middle of the print, directs his steps towards the right; where Eve, seen in a front view, appears standing on a bank, having her right hand on her bosom, and, with her left, covering her nakedness. Without name or mark. This piece measures six inches and seven-eighths in height, by five inches and three-eighths in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 2.)

Adam and Eve with the Infants Cain and Abel.

Adam appears, seated on the left, with the infant Cain beside him; Eve is seated on the right, with the young Abel on her knees, whom she holds with her left hand. Her right hand rests on the large stone on which she is sitting; and from under her left arm rises a distaff. This piece, which, like the foregoing, is without name or mark, measures six inches and seven-eighths in height, by five inches and a half in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 5.)

The Sacrifice of Cain and Abel.

In the middle of the print is an altar of a square proportion, beautifully decorated with ornaments of sculpture, in the manner of the antique. Upon it is Cain's offering of the first fruits of the earth, burning. Cain himself appears standing on the right, dressed in a short jacket, the folds of which he has hold of with his right hand: he raises his left hand, and bends forward, looking towards

his brother Abel, who is standing, on the left, with his offering of a small ram, or goat, which he bears in both hands. The figure of Abel has considerable elegance, and is larger than that of Cain. The back-ground, which rises high up in the print, represents a pleasing landscape, with two or three scattered houses situated on the banks of a lake. This piece, which, with the one following, was, I think, no doubt intended to accompany the three preceding, is in my own collection. It appears to have escaped the researches of Bartsch, and has no mark. It measures six inches and five-eighths in height, by five inches and a quarter in width.

The Death of Abel.

The figure of Abel, lying on his back, on the ground, is seen in a boldly fore-shortened point of view, his head being towards the spectator, on the left of the print. In the fore-ground, on the right, stands Cain, who is seen in a back view. He rests his right-hand on his club, and raises his left as if in expostulation; looking up, at the same time, at the Almighty, whose half-figure, leaning forwards from a cloud, appears in the sky, on the left, over the figure of Abel. Behind the figure of Abel is seen part of a rustic fence. This piece, which is in the collection of Mr. Lloyd, has neither the name nor the initials of Robetta. Bartsch appears to have been unacquainted with it. It measures six inches and three-quarters in height, by five inches and a quarter in width.

Adam and Eve with the Infants Cain and Abel.

This composition is very different from that of the same subject already described. Adam is seated on a bank, on the left of the print, fatigued after the labour of the day. At his feet is the infant Cain, seated on the ground, and holding a bird. On the right is Eve, standing with her distaff, and the infant Abel by her side. The back-ground represents a landscape. In the middle of the print,

at bottom, are the letters R B T A. This piece measures nine inches and a quarter in height, by six inches and three-quarters in width.

Mr. Bartsch notices two different impressions of this engraving. In the *first*, the sky is left white. In the *second* impression, which he says is retouched, there are several clouds, particularly on the right-hand. (*Bartsch, No.* 3.)

A Repetition of the same Subject.

Adam, whose countenance is expressive of sadness, holds the hoe, with which he has been tilling the ground, with his right hand, and is seated on a bank by the side of Eve, who has the infant Abel on her lap, and points towards Cain, who is sitting at her feet, in the fore-ground, on the right-hand. The back-ground represents a landscape. This piece, which is without mark, measures nine inches and seven-eighths in height, by seven inches in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 4.)

Subjects of the New Testament, Saints, &c.

The Adoration of the Shepherds.

In the middle of the print, the Madonna is represented on her knees, her hands joined together, and elevated, adoring the infant Jesus, who is supported in the arms of an angel, who is kneeling on the right. Two other angels are on their knees, one on either side the Virgin, and a fourth angel, in a similar attitude of devotion, is seen a little behind. Beyond this group, a little to the right, is a building fallen into ruins, through the door of which is perceived the ox and the ass. Towards the near-ground, on the same side, is Joseph, standing: he is seen in a back view, and turns his head towards a shepherd, who, with his arms extended and elevated, prostrates himself on the ground. This shepherd is attended by two dogs. In the fore-ground, on the left, are three other shepherds. The dis-

tance on this side presents the view of a village. Mr. Bartsch observes of this piece, that it does not bear the initials nor the name of Robetta, but that it is undoubtedly by his hand. It measures about ten inches and a half in height, by six inches and three quarters in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 7.)

The Adoration of the Magi.

The Virgin is seated on a rocky bank, in the middle of the print, and is seen in a front view. She has the Infant on her lap, who holds a small vase, one of the presents of the Magi. The stems of two trees, one on each side the Madonna, rise to the top of the print, and support a light canopy or roof of thatch, under which is a group of three angels singing out of a scroll. Immediately behind the Virgin, on the left, part of the figure of Joseph is seen, who appears conversing with her, and on the right are the ox and the ass.

The Magi, with their attendants, occupy the near-ground on either side the print. Amongst these, an old man, whose cap, surrounded by a crown, lies on the ground, appears kneeling on the right; and a second, a youth, kneels on the left, offering his present of a small vase: on the ground beneath this figure is a turban. The back-ground represents the view of a lake surrounded by a hilly country. On the right-hand, at bottom, under the cap of the old man before mentioned, is the name of the artist, thus: ROBETTA. This piece, which is one of Robetta's most capital performances, measures eleven inches and three-quarters in height, by ten inches and three-quarters in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 6.)

The Baptism of Christ.

St. John the Baptist, accompanied by two angels, who appear conversing together, occupies the right-hand of the print. In his left hand he holds a long staff surmounted by a cross, and, in his

right, a bowl, from which he pours water on the head of Christ, who, with his hands joined, is standing in the river Jordan. On the left, two men are seen, undressed, the one standing, and the other seated, on the bank of the river. In the middle, at the top of the print, the half figure of God the Father appears in a cloud, surrounded by four angels in the act of adoration. The letters RBTA, are engraved about the middle of the print, at bottom. This piece measures eleven inches and three-quarters in height, by eight inches and a half in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 8.)

Christ taking leave of his Mother.

Jesus, seen in profile, is standing towards the right, accompanied by his disciples. He bends his head with an air of sadness, and appears to listen to the Madonna, who, standing on the left-hand, in company with a number of persons who appear to take an interest in the scene, is addressing herself to him. Amongst other figures, may be remarked that of a naked infant, who is seated in the fore-ground, playing with a little dog. In the middle of the back-ground is a group of soldiers assembled around a well. The distance, on the right-hand, represents a town situated on an eminence. The letters RBTA are engraved in the middle of the print, at bottom. This piece measures ten inches and three-eighths in height, by eight inches and a half in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 9.)

The Resurrection.

Jesus Christ, holding a banner with his left hand, and pointing towards heaven (or perhaps giving the benediction) with the other, (see note, p. 452) appears hovering in the air, over the sepulchre which he has just vacated. Two soldiers, armed with spears, are running off towards the left. Two others, on the right, one of whom covers his head with his round shield, are getting up from the ground that they also may make their escape. Upon the front of the se-

pulchre is a basso-relievo, in which two angels are represented in the air, bearing the handkerchief of S. Veronica. The letters RBTA, are engraved in the middle of the print, at bottom. This piece measures eleven inches and three-quarters in height, by eight inches and a half in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 10.)

The Virgin and Child, with Angels.

The Madonna is giving the breast to the infant Jesus. The little St. John is seen further off. On either side are angels, in all five in number, in attitudes expressive of adoration. This piece is marked ROBTA, and measures five inches in width, by four inches and three-quarters in height. (*Bartsch, No.* 11.)

The Virgin and Child.

The Madonna is seated, in a landscape, with the infant Jesus in her lap, whom she supports with her left hand, whilst, with her right, she presents him with a small bird. The letters RBTA are engraved in the middle of the print, at bottom. It measures seven inches and three-quarters in height, by six inches and three-eighths in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 12.)

The Virgin and Child, with Angels.

The Virgin is seated, in the middle of the print, supporting the infant Jesus with both hands, who, seated on her lap, bends forward to embrace the little St. John the Baptist. On the left are two angels, figures of the greatest elegance, standing, one of whom raises his hands in devotion, and, at the same time, turns towards his companion, as if inviting him to join him. On the right, behind the Madonna, is another angel. This piece bears neither the name nor the initials of Robetta, but it is undoubtedly by his hand, and may, indeed, be considered one of his most beautiful productions.

It measures nine inches and nine-eighths in height, by seven inches and a quarter in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 13.)

St. Sebastian and St. Rock.

St. Sebastian, pierced by arrows, and bound to the trunk of a tree, stands on the left. On the right, stands St. Rock, holding a staff with his right hand, and, with his left, lifting up a part of his garment, in order to expose the wound in his thigh. In the sky is an angel, descending, with the palm and the crown of martyrdom, towards St. Sebastian. This piece, which has no mark, measures eight inches and three-eighths in height, by five inches and a half in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 14.)

Faith and Charity.

The figure of Faith has a chalice in the left hand, and a cross in the right. Charity is represented with a child on her lap, holding a bird, and another child seated by her on the ground. The background represents a landscape. This piece is marked RBTA, and measures seven inches and a half in height, by six inches and three-quarters in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 15.)

SUBJECTS OF HEATHEN MYTHOLOGY, FANCY SUBJECTS, &c.

Ceres.

The Goddess is represented with her brows encircled by a garland of ears of corn, and a sort of thyrsis in her hand, surmounted by a vase filled with fruits and grain. She carries an infant satyr, and is followed by another. This piece is marked RBTA, and measures seven inches and an eighth in height, by five inches and a half in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 16.)

A Venus with Cupids.

Venus appears seated on a bank, holding, with her right hand, a wand, to the end of which is affixed a vase, filled with fruits and flowers. She is playing with two little Cupids: one of them is upon her lap; the other, who is standing by her, on the left, looks up towards her, and presses her bosom with his left hand. A third Cupid, holding a bird, is seated in the fore-ground, on the right, and, in the back-ground of the same side, a fourth Cupid is seen, seated on the ground, and amusing himself with a little dog, which he holds by a ribbon tied round his neck. All these Cupids are without wings. Towards the middle of the piece, rises a tree without foliage, to which is suspended a tablet, whereon the traces of the name of Robetta may be perceived, covered by dark hatchings. This piece measures nine inches and three-quarters in height, by seven inches in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 18.)

Apollo and Marsyas.

Apollo is playing upon a pipe made of reeds, and is listened to by Marsyas, near whom, lying on the ground, is a sort of violin, the bow of which he holds in his hand. Two men, who are seated, and a female, who is standing, appear to be the judges of the performance. At the feet of Marsyas is a child, holding in his arms a small monkey. This piece is marked RBTA, and measures ten inches and an eighth in height, by seven inches and a quarter in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 19.)

An unknown Subject.

On the right of this piece, a young man is represented, seated on a stone, with his back against the trunk of a tree, to which he is bound by cords, with his hands behind him. He appears to complain of his captivity to a young woman who is standing before

him with her hands crossed on her bosom. Another young female, who is standing, in the middle of the print, plays on the harp, and, on the left, Pan is represented, playing on a horn, which he holds elevated. In the fore-ground of this side, is a second young man, seated, in an easy attitude, on a piece of rock, at whose feet is a small snake twisted round a stump. All these figures are naked. The scene is a landscape. This piece bears the letters R B T A, engraved in the middle of the print, at bottom, and measures nine inches and three-eighths in height, by six inches and three-quarters in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 17.)

The Choice of Hercules.

Hercules is represented, in the flower of his youth, standing, towards the left of the print, and resting with both hands on his club. He listens attentively to what is said to him by two naked females, intended to personify Virtue and Vice; of whom the one, standing in the middle of the piece, is seen in front, and the other, on the right, in a back view. Behind, on the left, are the three Graces; and above, on either hand, are Cupids flying in the air. This engraving, according to Bartsch, bears neither the name nor the initials of Robetta. He considers it one of that artist's earliest productions. It measures ten inches and an eighth in height, by seven inches and a half in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 20.)

Hercules destroying the Hydra.

Hercules, who is standing, near the middle of the print, is giving a blow to the Hydra with his club; the monster being represented near the mouth of a cavern, on the left-hand. The back-ground exhibits a mountainous landscape. About the middle of the piece, at bottom, are the letters R B T A. This engraving measures nine inches and an eighth in height, by seven inches and a quarter in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 21.)

Mr. Bartsch observes, that there are two different impressions of this piece. In the *first*, the whole of the sky is left white, but, in the *second*, some clouds are introduced, and also a falcon chasing a heron.

Hercules and Antæus.

Hercules is represented strangling Antæus; and, in the foreground, on the left-hand, is an infant, who appears to be in convulsions. Bartsch observes that this piece is ill drawn. He considers it one of the artist's earliest works. It is without the name or initials of Robetta, and measures ten inches in height, by seven inches and a half in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 22.)

Mutius Scævola.

Mutius Scævola stands on the right, burning his hand in the fire, which is upon an altar in the middle of the print. Near him are two soldiers, in attitudes testifying their astonishment at the action. On the left stands Porsenna, holding a small standard, and accompanied by another soldier. This engraving is marked RBTA, and measures eight inches and a quarter in height, by six inches and a quarter in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 26.)

The Torments of Love.

In the middle of this piece, a young man is represented, seated on a bank, with his back against a tree, and bound, by the left arm, to one of its branches by Cupid, at the same time that he is caressed by a woman, who is standing by him on the left. A man, on the same side, accompanied by an infant, stands looking at them. On the right, is another man, who is also accompanied by an infant, and appears forcibly leading away a female, whose countenance is full of sadness, and who raises her right arm in the air, in an attitude expressive of her distress. All these figures are

naked. Upon a tablet, suspended to the branch of a tree, near the right-hand border of the print, is the name, thus: ROBETA. This engraving measures eleven inches and three-quarters in height, by eleven inches in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 25.)

The Old Woman and the four Lovers.

In the middle of this piece is an old woman, standing, and seen in a front view. She looks down, towards the left, at a little child, who is seated on the ground, hugging and playing with a bird. Behind the infant is a young man, sitting on a piece of rock, caressing his mistress, who is seated upon his lap. On the right are two other lovers, who, standing, and holding each other round the waist, are conversing together; the woman being seen in front, and the man in a back view. All these figures are naked. On the left border of the print is a group of trees; nearer the centre, in the middle ground, is a single tree; and, in the distance, is a hilly landscape, terminating, on the right, with the view of a small town. The two bottom corners of this plate appear to have been cut away. The print bears neither the name nor the initials of Robetta, but it is undoubtedly his work. It measures ten inches and an eighth in height, by seven inches and an eighth in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 24.)

It is worthy of remark, that the view of the town in the distance of this piece, is copied, with little alteration, but in a reverse direction, from part of the back-ground of one of Albert Durer's engravings on copper; viz. that styled by Bartsch, (vol. vii. No. 73) 'L'effet de la jalousie;' in which is represented a naked female, recumbent in the lap of a satyr, defended from the attacks of another woman, who is endeavouring to beat her with a stick, by the interposition of a naked man, armed with a small tree, which he has torn up by the roots.*

* This piece of Durer, as is the case with a considerable proportion of his early works of engraving, is, unfortunately, without date. It was, perhaps, executed by him between

Two Female Figures with a Lyre.

On the left of this piece, a female, who is dressed in the costume of the antique, and holds a masque with her left hand, is represented leaning upon a sort of altar, and apparently listening with great attention to the sound of a lyre which is placed upon the altar, and played upon by another female, who is standing on the right. The letters R B T A are engraved in the middle of the piece at bottom. It measures eight inches and a quarter in height, by five inches and three-eighths in width. (*Bartsch, No.* 23.)

I must add, respecting this piece, that it appears to have been engraved by Robetta, from a very elegant design, painted in chiaro-scuro in fresco, by Filippino Lippi, the son of Fra Filippo Lippi,* in the 'Capella Strozzi,' in the church of S. Maria Novella, at Florence. I have not, indeed, seen the print; but a drawing, made from the fresco itself, is now before me; and it so exactly agrees with the above description (except that, in the print, the figures are reversed, having been engraved on the copper in the same direction as the painting) as to leave in my mind no doubt as to the fact. It is not improbable that some of Robetta's other works may also have been taken from the designs of Lippi; and I am the more inclined to indulge such a conjecture, because amongst the members of the 'Compagnia del Paiuolo' before-mentioned, there was, as we have seen, one Ruberto di Filippo Lippi,† (doubt-

the years 1504 and 1508, in the first of which years he engraved his celebrated print of Adam and Eve. Robetta's print, therefore, may probably have been executed as late as 1509 or 1510. I must add, however, that, amongst the other engravings which I have seen by Robetta, I have found no similar instance of plagiarism from Albert Durer; whence I think it fair to conclude that the chief part of his engravings were executed before any of the prints of the German artist found their way to Florence.

* Filippino Lippi, after the death of his father, which took place when he was yet a boy, became the scholar of Botticelli. He died, aged forty-five, in the year 1505.

† This Ruberto is spoken of, in Vasari's life of Gio. Francesco Rustichi, as the scholar and assistant of that artist. The probability is, that he was originally a scholar

less so called because he was a relative, or had been a scholar of Lippi) who may readily be supposed to have possessed some of Lippi's drawings, and occasionally to have obliged his friend Robetta with the loan of them to engrave from.

That, besides the engravers already mentioned, there were many other natives of Tuscany, who, during the last forty years of the fifteenth century, and the early part of the sixteenth, practised the newly discovered art, there can be little doubt; and, indeed, the fact may be collected, as was observed in a former page, (319,) from the general tenour of Vasari's account.* He has neglected, however, to record the names of these artists, and, unfortunately, other obstacles join in opposing themselves to any present attempt to render our series of the ancient engravers of this school so complete as we could wish. For although, in default of the evidence of history, our inquiries might be aided by an extensive and frequent reference to ancient Italian prints themselves, these are of so great

of Lippi, but that, preferring sculpture to painting, he afterwards attached himself to Rustichi. He is not mentioned at the end of the life of Filippino Lippi, amongst that artist's scholars, which leads me to suspect that he might have quitted him some time before his death, in 1505.

* I have sometimes thought that Vasari meant to designate Andrea del Verrocchio as an engraver, when he called him, at the beginning of his life, " Orefice, Prospettivo, Scultore, *Intagliatore*, Pittore, e Musico;" though I admit that the term is equivocal, and may mean that, besides being a sculptor, a painter, and a goldsmith, he was also a *carver* in wood. Stronger grounds of conjecture are furnished by Landino concerning Leone Battista Alberti, of whom, in one of the introductory chapters to his commentary upon Dante, (viz. that bearing the title " FIORENTINI EXCELLENTI IN DOTTRINA") he thus speaks: " Scrisse de sculptura: el " qual libro e intitolato statua. Ne sola- " mente scrisse: ma di mano propria fece: " et restano nelle mani mie commendatissime " opere di penello, di scalpello, *di bulino*, et " di getto dallui fatte." That even Lionardo da Vinci might have occasionally practised engraving, I was some years ago led to think, upon the occasion of turning over the invaluable volume of designs, by that great artist, in his Majesty's collection; in which I found, pasted on the leaves amongst Lionardo's studies of horses, two engravings, or, perhaps, two pieces of the same engraving representing horses' heads, executed exactly in the taste and manner of his drawings. From what I remember of these fragments, I suspect they are no other than the anonymous print mentioned by Bartsch, vol. xiii. p. 331, and ascribed by him to Io. Ant. Brixianus, cut in two.

rarity, (more especially the engravings of the early Florentine school) that the means of making the necessary comparisons are denied us.

I shall close this chapter with the description of an engraving, not less singular on account of the matter it represents, than remarkable for the manner in which it is executed. I cannot, indeed, take upon me to assert positively that it is of the Florentine school; but I incline to the opinion, and have therefore thought it better to insert it here, than to place it amongst the engravings of any other school to which it appears to bear less affinity. Bartsch, who has described it, (vol. xiii. pp. 357, 358.) gives it for title, "La puissance de l'Amour." He acknowledges, however, that its real signification is enigmatical, and I, therefore, prefer styling it:

AN UNKNOWN ALLEGORICAL SUBJECT.

In the upper part of this print, in the middle, a graceful figure of a young man is represented, standing on a pedestal, and seen in front. In his right hand, he holds a long wand, surmounted by a vase, from which issue flames of fire, and, in his left, which is elevated, a crescent.* His bosom is exposed, but the folds of a mantle, which is thrown over his shoulders, cover the lower part of his body. Below this pedestal, on the left, a young man is seen kneeling, resting on his staff; and, on the right, an old man, the upper part of whose body is naked, is represented, kneeling on a pedestal of larger dimensions than the former: he is turned towards the man with the crescent, and holds, with both hands, a small idol, bearing a vase on its head, which he appears to present to him. On a third pedestal, resembling a tombstone, and situated under the pedestal which supports the first described figure, another old man appears,

* Bartsch remarked, within the curve of this crescent, an extremely minute figure of a man on horseback. I am unable to distinguish it in the impression before me.

lying asleep on his back; and, upon a fourth pedestal, a little more to the right, is an elegant female figure, seated, caressing an infant. This woman is accompanied by two other females, with their infants standing on each side of her, one of whom bears her child upon her shoulders; and behind, on the right-hand border of the print, the heads of two other female figures are seen, bearing vases, and also the head of an old man. Upon the ground, under the last described group, are two figures, seated; one of which, accompanied by a little dog, appears bathing its feet in a small stream of water: nearer the middle of the fore-ground, is a young man, leaning on his left arm, asleep, at whose feet are a vase, a little child, and a dog; and on the ground behind him are two other men, the one seated, the other recumbent. In the fore-ground, on the left, are two horses: at the feet of one of them an infant appears, lying on the ground; and on the back of the other is seated a naked man, whose brows are encircled by a garland. Behind these figures is an elevated platform, or pedestal, of wider extent than any of those before described, and reaching from near the centre to the left border of the print. Upon this pedestal stands a young man, naked, supporting, with his left hand, a large vase, which he appears to offer to a naked female, who is standing, more to the right, by his side. Behind these two figures, on the same pedestal, are a little child, and a vase of larger dimensions than the former; and, on the left, are an old man with a child on his shoulders leaning on his staff, a younger figure holding with both hands a small vase, and three other figures, of which only the heads are seen. The back-ground, on the left, represents part of a colonnade of the Corinthian order; and on the right are various portions of rich architecture, decorated with statues and bassi-relievi. In the middle of the print, at bottom, is the mark of the artist, composed of the letters P P, in the manner which will be presently shewn. This engraving measures nine inches in width, by seven inches in height.

" This piece," says Mr. Bartsch, " is extremely remarkable for " the variety in the attitudes of the numerous figures it contains, " as well as on account of the correctness, the precision of outline, " and the gracefulness that reigns throughout. The shadows," he adds, " are for the most part produced by a very delicate sort of " work executed with the dry point; a circumstance which gives to " the print much of the appearance of a drawing outlined with a " pen, and highly finished with Indian ink."

It is proper, however, to observe, that the last remark seems to apply only to an impression of this interesting engraving, taken before the plate was worked over with dots, executed with the graver, by means, as Mr. Bartsch thinks, of the percussion of a hammer. I shall, therefore, here give the distinctions which that writer notices between the two impressions which came under his cognizance.

" In the *first impression*," says he, " the work is extremely de- " licate, and the upper parts only of the letters P P appear; the " lower parts of those letters, as well as the thin stroke which unites " them, being *effaced*.*

" The *second impression*," continues he, " was taken from the " plate after it had been retouched by strokes of the hammer, by " some goldsmith of little ability, who spoiled the engraving; more " especially as he omitted to finish the whole subject: for the " figure of the young man holding the crescent, that of the old " man kneeling who presents him with the idol, five figures in " the fore-ground on the right-hand, and the architecture in " the back-ground on the same side, are left in the state to " which that part of the plate was reduced when the artist under- " took the task of retouching it; that is to say, all those figures " are very feebly expressed, the plate having previously suffered

* " Effacées:" Bartsch must surely mean that the lower parts of the above letters were added in the *second* impression, not that they were *effaced* from the first.

" by too much printing. It is also to be remarked that, in this " impression, the lower parts of the letters P P, and the thin " stroke by which they are joined together, are clearly ex- " pressed."*

I have not had an opportunity of seeing the two impressions of this engraving, which Bartsch thus describes; but I possess an impression of it, differing materially from both of them; having been taken off after the artist, whom he supposes to have retouched the plate, had completed his work, with the exception of one or two very small parts, not worth noticing. I am, therefore, led to suspect that Bartsch's opinion, that the plate, after it had been worn by frequent printing, got into the hands of an ignorant goldsmith, by whom it was retouched, may be without foundation; and that, on the contrary, the plate was worked up with dots by the original artist himself: under which supposition, the *first* impression, noticed by Bartsch, must be considered as a *proof*, taken by the artist before he scraped off the *burr* left by the dry point, preparatory to his beginning to finish the plate, according to his original intention, with the graver, by means of the strokes of a small hammer. I am, indeed, the more inclined to this opinion, because, independent of its having been customary with the early engravers to begin their plates with the dry point, (of which numerous examples might be readily referred to in the works of Marc Antonio and others,) I do not discover, in the finishing of the print before me, those marks of ignorance of which Mr. Bartsch speaks; although I can readily conceive that the proof impression described by him, may possess a greater freedom of outline and delicacy of effect, than the finished print, in consequence of the artist having been better skilled in design than practised in the management of the burin. The reader will be enabled to form some idea of the style of this singular engraving, from a copy of part of the right-hand

* *Bartsch*, vol. xiii. pp. 359. 360. 361.

bottom corner of it, which, with the mark before-mentioned, is here inserted.

The Abbé Lanzi, " Storia Pittorica," vol. i. p. 83, of the edition already referred to, mentions a print representing ' Christ taken down from the Cross,' marked, like the above, with the letters P P; initials which he considers as indicating Pietro Perugino; but in the last and augmented edition of his work, (Bassano, 1809,) he omits the passage altogether; doubtless because, upon further considera-

tion, he found there was no good ground for his original opinion; or rather, perhaps we ought to say, for the opinion of a former possessor of the engraving in question, who, according, to Zani, "Materiali," p. 129, had written underneath it, with a pen, *Petrus Perusinus.* Zani, who saw this print in the collection of the Count Antonio Remondini, at Bassano, informs us, that it presents a composition of fifteen principal figures, and that it is marked at bottom with the letters P P, tied together, in the lower parts of the letters, with a knot or flourish, in the manner indicated in the opposite plate. It measures, he says, seven inches and six lines in height, (I am uncertain whether or not he means old French inches,) by six inches and two lines in width. Zani adds, that he is acquainted with two or three other pieces marked in the same manner, one of which represents, in a composition of numerous and very minute figures, the hunting of a lion. This piece is described by Bartsch, vol. xiii. p. 356, and, according to him, measures five inches and a half in width, by four inches and five eighths in height. I will only add that, besides the engravings above-mentioned, Bartsch also ascribes to the same artist a small print of a bacchanalian subject, copied from a larger one by Andrea Mantegna. This piece I have seen: it is marked n n, or, perhaps, RR; but I find nothing in it to induce me to consider it by the same hand as the above.

THE END OF VOL. I.

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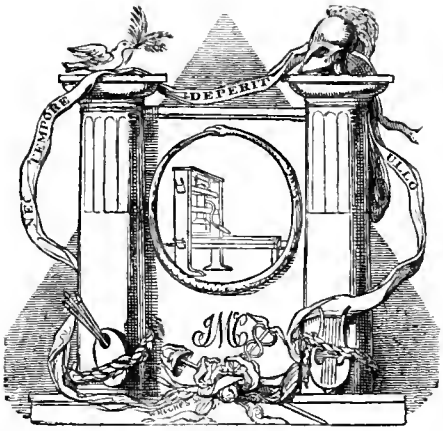
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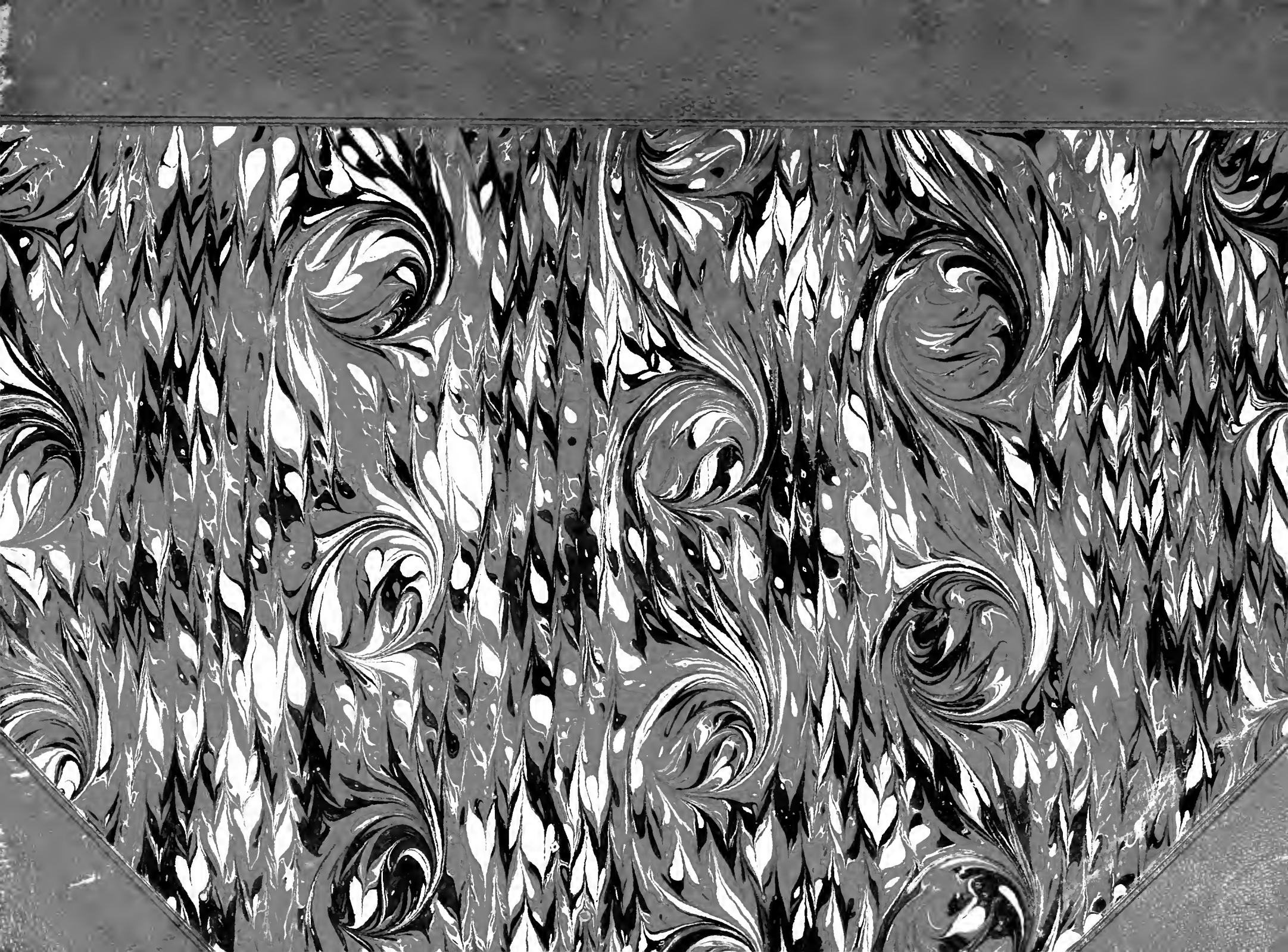
Page 27..	note, line 10	*for*, that "certain," *read* that in "certain."	
94..	note, line 3	torn of,	torn off.
147..	line	convallium,	convallum.
149	13	rouped,	grouped.
178	6	dignatories,	dignitaries.
185..	note, line 9	1459,	1469.
195..	line	appeasr,	appears.
207	6	spandle,	spandril.
303	5	spandles,	spandrils.
327..	the paging	337,	327.
327..	line	DIEANIRA,	DEIANIRA.
376..	last line	page 30,	page 130.
422..	line	2 from bottom ... and of which,	and at which.
494..	line	9 LAERTIOR,	LAETIOR.
677..	line	12 from bottom ... which,	whom.